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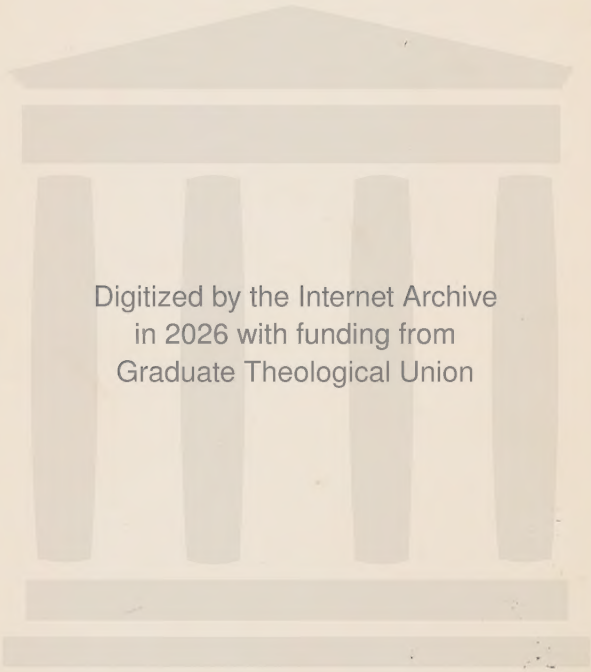
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DISCOURSES

ON

THE JEWISH RELIGION.

BY

ISAAC LEESER.

הלוא כה דברי נאם ה' כאש וכפטיש יפוצץ סלע:
ירמ' כג' כט':

"BEHOLD! THUS IS MY WORD, SAITH THE LORD, LIKE THE FIRE, AND LIKE THE HAMMER THAT SHIVERETH THE ROCK."

Jeremiah xxiii. 29.

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DISCOURSES

ON THE

JEWISH RELIGION.

DISCOURSE I.

THE GENIUS OF JUDAISM.

O Lord God of our fathers! whose wonders and whose mighty deeds are displayed over all thy works, whose goodness feeds all creatures, and whose providence provides for all, be Thou our stronghold and our support in all our wanderings, and let us experience thy goodness, sinners though we be, in all our relations, whether as individuals or members of the household of Israel. How gladly would we be Thine, devoted to follow Thee, obedient to thy will, only that we are drawn aside by the cares of life, and the temptations which the glare and glitter of worldly things place in our way. Let us entreat Thee therefore to enlighten our eyes in thy law, that we may be enabled, by discerning what is good, to do that only which is righteous in thy presence, and to avoid the counsels of sin though they wear the mask of temp-

tation and allurement. O aid us in our struggle with life and its cares! be with us as the Father of mercy, as the Guide who desires only the welfare of those who look to Him for light and instruction; for so shall we be safe from gross offences in our earthly pilgrimage, and be numbered in good truth among those who have obeyed thy will, in order that it may be well with us always. Amen.

BRETHREN!

What is the genius, the spirit of Judaism? Every well-defined system has a principle on which it rests, a centre around which it revolves; and unless our religion should have sprung up by mere chance, and be the accumulation of accidental principles engendered in the course of centuries, and that thus it had no nucleus of its own, but one by chance imagined for it in the gradual development it underwent in the slow progress of its assuming shape and form,—it must have a pervading feature by which we could at once define it, as contradistinguishing it from all others, and which would stamp it as a premeditated legislation, resting on a well-established basis, not the result of accident, but the forerunner of all the minor definitions required in the lapse of time to give it efficiency. Judaism, we say therefore, is not the result of accident; it did not take up its principles from causes not previously foreseen; but it would be the same in its internal principles, whether the world be new or old, enlightened or barbarous. This does not say, that its outward dress may not be subject to modification, or even violent revolution; but that when we come to ask what it radically is, we must

not look to the outside appearance it presents, not to the phases in the national history of those who possess it, but to the books in which its institutions are recorded, and to the traces which it has left in history in its progress through past centuries. It has therefore been found well adapted to all circumstances of society, whether the agricultural or commercial; to the state of freedom or slavery; to one of peace or of war; since in all conditions of life it steps in, noiselessly and soothingly, to depress what is harsh and brutal, to encourage what is sweet and humanizing in our nature. And why? because its basis is *love*,—love to God who has created us, love to man who was created to be the image of God; like whom we sprung from the earth, like whom we are endowed with an intelligent soul, like whom we are accountable for all our actions. No persecution of others, no hatred of our fellows can be called consonant with our faith, it is for each soul alone to feel its dependence on God, and if others do not feel the same, we may pity them, we may persuade them; but never dare we hate, dare we coerce, dare we persecute them, because they discern not like us the great Father in all walks of nature, because they feel not like us their entire dependence on his bounty, because they call not like us on his holy Name for aid and comfort in the hours of their tribulation. So many persons, and perhaps Jews among others, have charged against our religion that it was also a persecuting one, in agreement with that of the Nazarenes and that of the Mahomedans of our times; they aver that we hunted down those differing from us, and punished people for opinions' sake. The deduction to be drawn from such

assertions is, that we have no right to complain if persecution be committed against us, as we have only the poisoned chalice which we forced others to drain presented to our lips. Men say, that we talk now of moderation, because we are in a hopeless minority, in consequence of which we have everything to gain and nothing to lose, by our persuading others to establish universal freedom of thought and action; but that if we were back again in Palestine, or were in an overwhelming majority in any other country, we would soon teach the world that we could persecute and coerce by penal laws as well as all those, whom we so energetically accuse of their offences against universal equality.

Those who argue thus know not the history of our people, and as little the genius of our religion. We are not sufficiently acquainted with the practical working of our ancient polity in the time of the first and second temples; but there is no evidence derivable from Scripture that the practice of the precepts of Judaism was enforced on non-Israelites, not even the Sabbatic rest. We may concede that the public worship of idols was interdicted, since no idolatrous image was permitted to remain in the land; for, inasmuch as the eradication of falsehood from the heart of the people was predicated on the removal of all that should bear a semblance to the practices of old Egypt or ancient Canaan, their outward emblems could not be suffered to remain nor to be restored. Gross idolatry could therefore not be tolerated; but only because the state was a commonwealth of the Lord, of which He was the actual though invisible Chief, who would not therefore tolerate the presence

of objects avowedly contradicting his authority. The Ten Commandments also say that the stranger shall rest on the Sabbath; evidently however not to impose the burden of compulsory rest on him, but to absolve him equally with native Hebrews from a task of constant toil which otherwise his employers, who may be Jews, as well as others, would impose upon him. Understand well, in heathen ideas there was no period of rest assigned to the bondman and the labourer, except it be an occasional and periodical season of gross licentiousness, more calculated to brutalize than elevate the character of those who toil in the service of others. But now the law of Heaven stepped in between the masters and those bound to struggle in the various pursuits which make up the sum total of existence, and told them, "You shall not exact constant labour from any one subject to your control, whether it be the servant who dwells with you under the same roof, or the hired stranger who, having come from a distant country, is compelled to look to you for means of employment that he may be able to earn his livelihood in an honourable and independent manner, by producing something with his own hands, and not be compelled to look up to you for mere crumbs of charity which you might throw away on the idle and worthless sluggard."—I will prove to you, brethren, that this view is the only correct one of the injunction of the Ten Commandments which says: "Thou shalt not do any manner of work, neither thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger who is within thy gates." Here it says not "*the* stranger," which would include all sojourners in our

land, every one whose domicil might be in Palestine, but "thy stranger," that is, some one depending upon an Israelite, or else one who could be called in this connexion "thy," signifying a person belonging to the party addressed, or here, all Israel. But we are not left to mere inference which, however ingenious, might be deemed as unsound by those who may choose to dispute our view of the Hebrew commonwealth. For immediately after the promulgation of the Decalogue we are informed that Moses received the particular laws of justice upon the basis of which the state was to be administered. Now one of these refers also to the Sabbath, defining therefore the manner in which the general principle of Sabbatic rest was to be enforced. Let us therefore heed well what the law itself says, or else we must evidently go astray, on the crooked path of conjecture. But these are the words: "Six days shalt thou do thy work; but on the seventh day shalt thou rest (more correctly abstain); in order that thy ox and thy ass may have repose, and the son of thy maid-servant and the stranger may be refreshed." (Exod. xxiii. 12.) In reference to the observance however of the sacred day of rest we have the following definition: "And thou shalt speak to the children of Israel saying, But indeed my Sabbaths shall ye observe, for it (meaning the institution of the day of rest) is a sign between me and between you, throughout your generations, to know, that I am the Lord who sanctify you.—And the children of Israel shall observe the Sabbath, to make the Sabbath throughout their generations as an everlasting covenant." The penalty therefore denounced against its violation is not against the stranger who is not of

the house of Israel, but against those who entered into a covenant with the Lord by standing at the foot of Sinai, saying, "All the words which the Lord hath spoken will we do." Whoever is, accordingly, of the descendants of Israel, is bound by the mutual covenant between God and the nation that He chose as his own; but whoever is not of them cannot be held to punishment for not observing the covenant, in which he has no inherent interest, unless he voluntarily chooses to bind himself by a new obligation, and to join himself to the born servants of the Most High. I do not wish you to take this on my own assertion; but I will prove it for you from another portion of Scripture, I mean the fifty-sixth chapter of Isaiah. The passage is in the following words: "Thus saith the Lord, Observe justice, and do righteousness; for near is my salvation to come, and my righteousness to be revealed. Happy is the man that doeth this, and the son of man who layeth hold thereon, keeping the Sabbath not to violate it, and keeping his hand from doing any kind of evil. And let not the son of the stranger who joineth himself unto the Lord say thus, The Lord will surely sever me from his people; for thus saith the Lord,—And as regardeth the sons of the stranger, who join themselves unto the Lord to serve Him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be unto Him as servants, every one keeping the Sabbath not to violate it, and laying all hold of my covenant: even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them rejoice in my house of prayer; their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be favourably received on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations." How many holy thoughts

are excited in us when reading so much hope for mankind, for sincere belief, for righteous action; but we must pass all by to-day, as it is merely to prove a single point that I cited the passage; and it does establish beyond a peradventure, that the stranger can only be held liable to the law by his own voluntary adoption thereof; as it is a privilege to belong to the people of the Lord; and if one wishes to be one of them, he must seek the alliance, and prove himself worthy through an observance of the precepts, and no one can therefore force him to act as Israelites do, nor, what becomes evident of itself, punish or persecute him for believing and acting differently from those belonging to the house of Israel. The stranger, the prophet says, shall not say in despair that the Lord will make a dividing line between him and his people; but he assures all that, by joining themselves unto the Lord, they can become his servants, and be received equally with the born Hebrew before the Most High, through faith and deeds, of which latter the Sabbath is especially designated. How then can it be supposed that we were permitted to punish any non-Israelite, during the existence of our state, for not keeping the Sabbath? The conclusion evidently is, as I have stated, the Sabbatic rest was enjoined towards the labouring gentile, whether free or bondman, as a gracious privilege; for inasmuch as he lived in a state over which the Lord was King and Protector, he should participate in the rest of body and mind which was the characteristic mark of the land, where no one could be held to toil for a master, whether benevolent or cruel, as soon as the setting of the sun on the sixth day announced that the Sab-

bath had thrown its mantle of repose and peace over the country in all its length and breadth. But if the stranger worked for himself, quietly pursuing his avocations without inducing Israelites to violate the law: where was the power to hold him criminally responsible for doing what he had not bound himself to observe, by a voluntary joining himself unto the Lord? Only then and thus became he a son of Israel, after choosing to be one of the covenant, and accepting for himself the sweet burden of God's kingdom, which we were chosen to bear from the very birthday of our nation.

No, brethren, persecution is not the watchword of Israel, and they who charge us with it do not understand our history, nor our law, as I have already stated. The essence of God's government on earth is love, universal, all-pervading, unending loving-kindness and mercy. How could his law then be otherwise than one of love, kindness, and mercy? We obey only to be blessed; we act only to receive the increased favour of God, and whatever precept of our religion we fulfil will only tend to cause an increase of our happiness. It would be preposterous to suppose that we could force such a system, by the terror of the sword or civil disqualification, upon those who did not voluntarily embrace it, whilst it is freely given to the whole world, whilst every human being is privileged of becoming by adoption a member of our communion, by which no worldly advantages can be secured, no offices of trust or emolument be obtained, only to be numbered as one of the people whom the Lord has selected as his peculiar treasure. Nor is it requisite for the salvation of the individual that he

should be a professing Israelite; since the Law was given solely to us as an inheritance of the family of Jacob; to be theirs as a gift of the Lord, that they might be the witnesses of his glory, power, and unity; consequently no one can be compelled to become one of the witnesses against his will; wherefore his salvation does not depend upon it, provided he carefully observes the precepts of universal applicability, which God first promulgated to the family of Noah when they left the ark after the termination of the flood. The nature of our religion therefore precluded us from persecuting non-Israelites for nonconformity, and history may be challenged to prove that the practice of our people was ever the reverse of this.* What is more, however, freedom of opinion was secured to all men; for even Israelites could not be held to account for thoughts, belief and opinions, but solely for open acts against the sovereignty and majesty of God, exhibited by a wilful transgression of the commandments. No such thing as an inquisition into the faith could be tolerated or imagined even in the Jewish commonwealth, for the very reason that no one was empowered to sit in judgment on the thoughts and private feelings of his brother. Understand well, I do not say, that punishment was not awarded for transgressions purely religious, in contradistinction to those purely moral in their nature; because the Bible would contradict such a statement, and prove its falsehood. And this was also quite reasonable. For we must consider that the religion of the

* The conduct of John Hyrcanus to circumcise the conquered Idumæans was against our laws, and brought mischief in abundance in its train.

Bible was also the civil law of the Israelites; wherefore every citizen of the state was firmly held to its observances, and any infraction was viewed more in the light of a crime against the state than one against religion.—As, however, no state-crime can be properly committed by thought, so was unbelief not punishable, unless the conduct of the individual had become the exponent of his wicked thoughts, or what is the same thing, unless he had wilfully trangressed before witnesses some one or more of the deeds prohibited in the code of the land. So also was there no civil visitation for omitting to do the deeds required in Scripture; for, since the reward of them is not within the reach of human means, and as the omission of them adds nothing to the injury of mankind, they were reserved for the Almighty, to punish the dereliction as his wisdom and justice might demand. —To prove the existence of this freedom of thought among us, we may refer to the section which we have read this day as a proof. The *eighteenth* chapter of Deuteronomy contains first several commandments relative to the rights of priests and Levites; and next it prohibits superstitious practices in their various forms, enjoining on Israelites to be true and perfect with the Lord, to look up to Him for advice, and wait patiently till He discloses by the event what his wise designs may be. He next states that such superstitions as are now prohibited had been the custom of the nations of Canaan, whom they were soon to drive out from their land; but that the Israelites had received a different portion, because God would raise up to them from time to time prophets, who should be like Moses, faithfully speaking to the people the

messages which they may have received from the Lord of life, the Fountain of all knowledge; giving as a reason that they had asked for a messenger to communicate to them the will of God, at the time that they beheld the great fire at Horeb, and heard the fearful voice of their God. The text then says, that the Lord would raise up a prophet to Israel from among their own brethren, like unto Moses, in whose mouth God would place his word, and who should speak all that the Lord would command him to proclaim. Nevertheless we are told:

והיה האיש אשר לא ישמע אל דברי אשר ידבר בשמי אנכי אדרש מעמו : דבר' יח' יט':

"And it shall come to pass that, whoever will not hearken to my words which he (the prophet) shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." Deut. xviii. 19.

But the prophet who should presume to speak falsely in the name of God, or who should speak in the name of false gods, should die for his iniquity. This now opens to us, if properly and fully pursued, a wide field of inquiry; but we must confine ourselves to illustrate but one branch of the many which the text affords. We cannot well imagine a greater disrespect to the Deity than a non-attention to a message which He may communicate to the world. Still we are warned not to lay hand on the open unbeliever; because courts of justice have received no commission to avenge any thought, whatever it may be, so long as acts do not make it evident and cognizable to all. But observe, if one should presume to speak falsely in the name of God, thereby

endeavouring to mislead others unto error, or to speak in the name of a god who does not exist, that is, all deities save the Lord God of Israel, he must be put to death; because, should he succeed in impressing the people with a belief in what he says, he would produce and propagate injurious errors, and sap the foundation of the divine state, which is based on truth and revelation. The revelation I mean, is the public announcement of the Law on Sinai, which was made the basis of the code which God gave afterwards to Israel: now as God is true and his word is unchanging, all departure from this standard can only produce unhappiness to the individual citizen and injury to the state. Wherefore it is mercy to all that the seducer should be put away, so that he may not have a farther opportunity to entice his hearers from the God who has redeemed us from Egypt. Individual unbelief can only affect the culprit himself, hence though he sins, he only offends his Maker; he therefore justly reserves to himself the punishment of a crime resting between God and man. But when, on the other hand, the foundations and peace of society are attempted to be disrupted, it is the state which of right takes cognizance of the treason, and punishes the culprit with the utmost severity known to the law. That thus *Jews* may possibly have been punished at some period of our history for the very transgression here mentioned, for teaching things in the name of God which He had not spoken, or for speaking in the name of gods not known to our law, may be freely confessed, without its being chargeable to us that we were persecutors of those differing from us. The punishment of crime is no persecution of

the delinquent, it is merely an upholding of the rights and liberties of all others whom his crime might by chance injure; and as all of our people, the priest and the labourer, the prophet and the audience, were all alike Israelites, no one could complain if visitation was meted out to him for a wilful transgression of a well-defined crime; and in our state, where the Lord was the chief, no greater crime could be imagined than lowering Him in the estimation of the people, over whom He ruled as Sovereign, and who had received at his hands the law of life, and all the good which they so abundantly enjoyed. It was the love for the community which caused the individual to be punished; it was the rights of each which were protected when the transgressions were repressed by wholesome punishments. Our history shows abundantly the evil consequences of false teachings; hence we justify the doom which the law destined for those who failed here in their duty. Would to mercy! that we had always maintained a strict distinction between freedom of opinion in the single man, and the culpability of the teachers of falsehood. Never should we have wandered from our home, never should we now mourn over our dispersion in far and distant lands. But herein too we deemed ourselves wiser than our laws, we elevated ourselves above the standard of the Scriptures: and the errors which the wicked taught found an echo in the hearts of the transgressors, by which our state fell, and our multitudes were slain. It is only from God and through his mercy that we have been preserved alive, and that, despite of the advocates of falsehood and error, we are undiminished and entire. Let us then pray

that the Lord may farther hold his protecting shield over us; guard our going out and our coming in; strengthen the hands of the teachers of the truth; confound those who wish to mislead Israel unto error; and that He may establish his kingdom on earth, and dwell in our midst for times without end. Amen.

Elul 3d.
Sept. 1st. } 5608.

DISCOURSE II.

THE WORK OF REGENERATION.

O Father and King! have regard unto us, though we come laden with transgressions; listen to our prayer, though our iniquity lies heavy on us! and do according to thy unending mercy, but not according to the measure of our sins; and pardon, because Thou art good, and forgive, because Thou art infinite in love and kindness. Father! let thy ear be attentive to our call, and vouchsafe the light of thy countenance to the children of the dust, and bear them up in thy holy embrace, as the nurse carries the infant, far above the dangers which the earth and its tribulations present to our feet. King Eternal! rule Thou in our soul; implant thyself in our spirit, that we may adore Thee in the singleness of faith, and feel that our sins are forgiven, and that our iniquity has been atoned for, when Thou breathest thy pre-

cious peace into our hearts, and causest us to feel joy in righteousness, and pleasure in obeying thy will. And then will we be distinguished as thy people, the flock of thy pasture, when we are Thine, servants devoted to Thee with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our might, to love Thee, to fear Thee all the days which we live on the earth. Amen.

Brethren!

What is man in his fallen state? what is he when he is again reconciled to God? These are important questions, which it behoves us well to consider, on which we must ponder with deep anxiety if we wish to solve the problem of our existence. Well did the ancient Rabbi say, "I was only created to serve my Maker;" but when man forgets his God, and neglects the duties which his Father has prescribed, he evidently misses the aim and object of his being. When first we open our eyes to the beauty of God's creation, we are in a state of purity, free from sin, free from guilt, free from the consequence of transgression; we are at peace with Heaven, and in harmony with mankind. The balance of nature has not then been invaded by our wrongdoing, and our sleep is sound, our dreams are peaceful; because our soul feels not the discord between our acts and the beauty of what the Lord has called forth to fill the earth with beatitude and gladness. But as we advance in life this primitive innocency naturally quits us; "not to ministering angels was the law given," but to sinful mortals, those whose nature is a well-balanced mixture of good and evil, in whose heart there reigns a twofold spirit, the inclination for enjoyment, and

the power to subdue the will in obedience to what God has taught. The very awakening to this consciousness tolls the death-knell of infantine purity; and with it commences the active warfare between spirit and matter, between the brute nature and the sublime man, the image of God which dwells within us. Whatever be the reason of our twofold formation, we know enough to maintain that it does exist, and you all can testify to the fact being so from your own experience; since you never commenced to do what we call a good or bad act without feeling the struggle instantly rise within you, one feeling urging you on to the deed pictured forth in your mind, the other imploring you to desist. If you are suddenly impelled to give charity, your avarice begs you to restrain your hand, and to drop again into your well-filled purse the mite you first meant to devote to the relief of the indigent brother before you; it tells you of your own wants, of the demands of those in your house on your frugality and prudence, and it persuades you that all gifts not bestowed on you and yours will ultimately impoverish you. Again, let your anger be roused against your fellow-man, and you are ready to strike with the fist of wickedness the helpless offender, or to wound yet more him whom your strong arm has overthrown: and a still soft voice will counsel you to restrain the uplifted hand, or to sheathe the half-drawn dagger, inasmuch as it is not for man to avenge himself on his brother, or to redress his wrong by the strength of his own arm. It is this double heart which constitutes our nature, and in order to teach us how to govern it with reason and sound judgment, and to promote thereby our

happiness, was the law of God given us, that we might know when to act and when to desist, to distinguish between the voice which is evil within us, and that which is called good in the counsel of Heaven.

If now in stepping out of his innocent state of infancy, if when acquiring a knowledge of good and evil, a man is fortified by the wisdom which is of God, he will heed the voice which bids him to love his Maker, and to be kind to his fellow-man. But if at that period of diverging ways he foolishly steps into the smooth and level path which he imagines to discover on the road which sinners pursue; if he sees only himself and his in all relations of life, and finds nothing to obstruct his selfishness and those acts which administer solely to self-aggrandizement: he will naturally become estranged from God, a wanderer in the wide domain of his Father, without gratitude, without a sense of obligation, without consulting Him before he ventures to act, before he consummates his foregone thoughts;—he will not recognize the brother in the sons of man; he will not sympathize with them in their sorrow, nor have his heart glad if they are at peace, and prosperity smiles in their dwelling; for he will not believe that the eye of Providence watches over him; he cannot imagine that he is but one of the children of God, and that all others have received the same mission, the same desire for happiness, and are entitled to the same protection and indulgence which he claims for himself. Peace must be far from such a one; he fain would take up his permanent abode on earth, to dwell here unto everlasting; to taste unceasingly of the dainties which the forests, the fields, the brooks, and the seas

offer to his palate; to be rejoiced unremittingly by sweet sounds of music, by the splendid conceptions of the poet's mind and the artist's pencil; to revel without limit in the juice of the vine and the smiles of the fair; to be absolute in his will, undecaying in youth, undiminished in strength and the power of enjoying, despite of the vicissitudes which reach others, of the diseases which render the days of mortals full of sufferings and pain. And yet he feels pain in the hours of his highest enjoyment, and when the cup of life seems full of delights to overflowing, he then experiences the gnawing of the canker-worm at his heart, bidding him to experience his mortality. Still he is not subdued; he only plunges the deeper into the enslaving embrace of the passions; he will drink deeper, because his hand shakes while he grasps the cup; he will yet eat more largely while his organs are dizzy with the whirl of disease; he will clasp more closely to his bosom the fatal seduction that leads him astray farther and farther from the path of godliness; and he will in this way spend his days as though there were no God, as though there were no accountability. Rest on earth, he has none; and where is he to seek for rest in heaven? The earthly pleasure he has tasted to oversatiety; but has he prepared himself to enjoy those which are for hereafter? He himself was, to his imagination, supreme on earth; and has he learned that there is a Creator, an everlasting God, an unforgetting Judge? O how the heart of the righteous must bleed whilst viewing one to whom the earth is all—eternity nothing; who toils, who thinks only for what he can see, but has no feeling for the universe, that visible to the eye, and

the yet greater world, the invisible which the Lord has formed? And yet speak to him of the folly of his ways; appeal to him that he is mortal, that his end must come before he has enjoyed himself one half as much as he desires: he will, nevertheless, not heed you, vainly deeming himself just in his own eyes, and as pursuing the proper road to happiness; because his spirit is sick, his sensations are blunted, and he has not acquired as yet the power over the brute heart which is within him, and he will therefore continue as he has done, walking the earth without joy, pursuing his selfish ends without satisfaction.

Still that which is not within the power of philosophical appeals to accomplish, is within that of the word of God—that guide to salvation, that voice which constantly warns and teaches the children of man. Though a mortal be plunged far into the mire of iniquity, he is not lost eternally, if he will but awaken and rise in the strength of renewed virtue. Just as philosophy is unable to teach us what is right in the beginning, so are its appeals insufficient to reclaim us when we have erred. The knowledge of our mortality, its greatest realization, may, and perhaps will, stimulate us "to pluck the roses ere they wither;" the uncertainty of our hold on life will naturally admonish us to drink while the wine is still flowing, to eat while the table is decked with dainty viands. There is no need to hunt up the lives of the voluptuary and the tyrant to prove our position; for your own good sense will demonstrate its reasonableness, since, if we view the earth as our only home, we must also regard it as the sole source of our enjoyment; hence the very approach of death ought

not to deprive us of a single pleasure which presents itself, if we believe there is no hereafter. But it is different with him who has such a knowledge of God and his ways as the Bible gives us; he has a field of operation not confined to himself, nor is his life bounded by the brief limit of hours, days, months, and years, which are allotted to him here below. He is then but one of a vast multitude all equally alike in being the objects of the tenderest care of the Creator; he with them is accountable to the same almighty Judge; and he is told that though he suffers the various ills of existence, it will not prevent his obtaining the due reward of all his exertions; and should he die without any worldly enjoyment ever having been his, he will still be in the presence of his God, who will recompense him with a delight which no eye has seen, save that of the Lord alone. But this is not all; reason would teach that if we had so glorious a destiny, and we had thrown it away by vain indulgence and idle dissipation, we must have forfeited all claim to it by our unwise conduct. Religion, however, steps in with an assurance of life even here, and tells that heaven can be regained, though it was lost by transgression; that an offended Father can be reconciled by the contrition of the erring child. There is presented to us, in the words of our faith, no reservation about an inexorable justice which must needs be gratified by the death of him who is guilty of death; but we are told that God is "merciful towards all his creatures." (Ps. cxlv. 9.) Multiform may be man's transgressions; greatly may his sins call for retribution; but the goodness of God is far exceeding

all his misdeeds, and the long-suffering Father will forgive, because He delights in pardoning.

The question, however, arises: "How is this to be effected? is a man to sin, and yet not be punished? is he to defy the law, and yet escape unscathed?" Far from it; because our religion teaches us "The soul that sinneth, even she shall die." (Ezek. xviii. 4.) But it is solely the unregenerate soul, the obdurate will, that calls down for visitation; since only for the malefactor untouched by the fear of the Supreme are the terrors of spiritual death prepared; to him, however, whose heart is touched, no matter how late in life, by the word of God, there will be healing, there will be a remedy, a reconciliation with the Lord, a renewed promise of life. While man indulges in the base pursuit of earthly gain, aggrandizement, and pleasure, his spirit is, as was said already, in a state of warfare with God, in a constant opposition to the interests of mankind. When he now awakens from this terrible trance, and finds the unsatisfactory result of all that he deemed good; to experience the cloying effects of mere animal indulgence; the tormenting consciousness of ungratified ambition; the ingratitude of the very instruments he relied on to forward his schemes; and then calls back the early lessons of infancy, or the instruction which wise men have addressed to him in his thoughtless moments, and which he then passed by as of no value or importance; or if he is of his own reflection driven to inquire whether life presents nothing but the earth and the earthly; if, in short, by any of the many roads to instruction he is moved to ask, "What has God taught us concerning himself and our destiny in the world?" he

will, thus aroused, cast away the thoughts to which he before this clung; he will leave off from the pursuits which he hitherto loved, and attach himself to the Guide who never misleads, to the Lord of life whose promises never deceive or fail of their fulfilment. Therefore, says the prophet (Isaiah lvii. 19): "There is peace, there is peace to him that is far, and to him that is near, saith the Lord, and I have healed him." Yet let a man have strayed far from the way of righteousness, or let him be only on the verge of departure, he is admonished that there is hope for him, that the Lord will heal his wounds, and that he shall have peace, peace within himself, a repose of conscience, a satisfaction with his own deeds, whereas before, all enjoyments only tired, whereas hitherto, all pursuits left a dreary void in his heart. He shall have also peace without; mankind, formerly his enemies, or, envious of his success, revengefully disposed to him, because of his arrogance and pride, will now become reconciled to him, seeing that he sympathizes with them in joy and sorrow, that his bread is given to the hungry, his garment to the naked. He shall at last have peace with God, the breach which his deeds had made in the wall of righteousness will be repaired, the distance which his sins had placed between him and his Maker will be lessened, and he will be accepted again as one in whom the Father of all finds delight, the beloved child who is again received with joy, after a long absence, in the peaceful halls of his paternal mansion. In this scheme of repentance there is justice gratified, though no punishment is meted out. God punishes only to amend, to admonish the erring child that the path

trodden is one of danger and death; if, therefore, the sinner returns to Him in sincerity and truth, the demands of justice are of themselves satisfied, since the effect of retribution is attained without their aid. To say that, without an atonement actually offered, God cannot forgive, is not only contradicting his supreme power, as we would discover it through means of our reason, but is in evident contradiction to his declared will, and the knowledge He proclaimed of himself. He taught us that He will forgive any and every offence, if we but return to Him, and obey his voice (Deut. iv. 29, 30), because He our God is merciful, not because He has been appeased through sacrifice or punishment. It is true He also declares in another passage (Exod. xxxiv. 7), that He will suffer no guilt to pass unrequited; but, in the first place, this may refer to the unatoned-for man, to the unrepentant sinner, who passes through life without being converted back to God; and secondly, even admitting that it refers to all sins, still it will not be asserted that no salvation can be purchased by man through repentance; requiting one for a wrong done, is an entirely different idea from rejecting him altogether, or asking of him something more than is in his power to accomplish. When the Father punishes a disobedient child, he corrects him only that he may be improved thereby; and even so when God requites our sins, it is only to chastise, and thereby to improve the heart. He could not mean in calling himself merciful and long-suffering, to contradict himself in the next verse, and assert that every sin should be followed by entire condemnation; reason might indeed demand it, as we have said already, since every departure from the

strict rule of right is, when purposely done, a wilful disregard of the divine authority. But we are not left to the guidance of naked reason; we are under the teachings of God's holy Spirit itself, and therefore we speak of Him not as we would picture Him by unaided reason, but as He has taught us to regard Him, that is, as the One who is infinite in mercy and goodness, who will not be wroth forever, nor contend to everlasting, so soon as the spirit is humbled before Him, and the souls that He has made are grieved. (Comp. with Isaiah lvii. 16.) This exhibits to us the doctrine for which Jews have always contended, in accordance with the express words and spirit of the Scripture, that life and death were surrendered to our own choice at the time we were endowed with liberty of conscience, and empowered to choose between good and evil. We have the disposition to do what is wrong, also the power to control this sinful propensity, while we are in a comparative state of innocence; so also have we the remedy given us to amend sin, and to atone for it in our own persons, when we have thoughtlessly yielded ourselves to iniquity. Were it that another could assume our guilt, or that in no other manner could salvation be procured, there would have been a positive doctrinal revelation of this sort imparted to us. This, however, is not the case; in one instance, it is said, "Even I, even I, blot out thy transgression for my sake, and thy sins will I not remember;" in another it is said, "The soul that sinneth shall die;" consequently there is no power to save the sinner from the indignation of God, except by the remedy which He also indicated, that is, a thorough repentance and an amendment of conduct.

In this spirit does Ezekiel teach, in the same chapter wherein he exhorts the sinner that he must perish for his wrongdoing, that the death demanded is not absolutely the consequence of iniquity, since it is in the power of man to cause a revocation of the evil decree. And thus speaks the prophet:

והרשע כי ישוב מכל חטאתו אשר עשה ושמר את כל חקותי ועשה משפט וצדקה חיה יחיה לא ימות: יחז' יח' כא':

"And the wicked, if he turneth from all the sins which he hath done, and observeth all my statutes, and doth justice and righteousness, shall live, he shall not die." Ezek. xviii. 21.

The death, therefore, annexed to crime, is also removable at the option of the transgressor, since repentance is the antidote to what we may aptly call the poisonous effect of transgression; as the Rabbis express it, בראתי משחית בראתי לו תבלין "The Deity says, If I have created the destroyer, I have also created a remedy to overcome him." Every man, therefore, belonging to Israel, as soon as he has heard the message of life—and who is there that has not?—should arise in his strength, and cast away the trammels of passion, which bind him a captive slave to the things of this earth. It is not in the language of human philosophy, in the despair of one who hates mankind and their enjoyments, because his appetite palls by over-indulgence, that he is told to forego his own will while the powers and zest of existence remain undiminished; but it is the call of a merciful Providence which bids him to number his days, that he may apply his heart to wisdom. He is told that there is abundance of

peace to those who love the law of God: why will he then have warfare with Heaven?—why seek contest with the sons of earth? He is told that those who fear the Lord shall have length of days in a world where they shall enjoy delights at the right hand of the Eternal Father forever, whereas the sinning soul shall be cut off from the land of life. Why will he then choose the death of his true portion, the spirit which will remain imperishable? And let him not flatter himself with the miserable hope of annihilation; that the grave will cover all that is left of him; that there is no account and judgment in the tomb whither he is going. For, O! there is an hereafter, a world enduring and bereft of earthly attributes, and where we shall be brought to judgment for all the deeds which we have done when sojourning our brief space on earth. The man who has only an existence in this world can soon cut short his sorrows, by severing the weak thread which binds us all to life. The stab of a knife, or the drinking of a small portion of a deadly fluid, or a plunge into the watery element, will remove him beyond the reach of the direst poverty, or the pangs of the severest pain. It would be in this instance but to resolve and to be free. But how does this tally with our actual experience? Let us suffer what we may, we start back with horror at the thought of the fatal leap which hurries us into eternity. Whence this feeling?—whence this dread? Is it not the voice of God within us, which bids us to stay here until He summons us to himself? Is it not in effect the admonition which we constantly hear: "Remain true and faithful—this is not thy abiding-place—there are joys beyond the grave, which are

thine only on condition of obedience, patient enduring, and resignation to thy Maker's will?" But O! let him not delay to repent while his strength remains; let him think of his God before the "evil days come, the years in which he saith he hath no pleasure." Let him call on God, so soon as he discovers that he has sinned; let him pour forth prayer and entreaty to impress on himself the enormity of his ingratitude,—how he had the path of life laid open before him; how he saw the hand of Mercy stretched forth to guide him aright, and he chose to follow the path which leads to destruction, and rejected the offer which Mercy had addressed to him. Let him weep when he stands self-convicted; let him cover his eyes with his hollow hands, when he is confounded and rooted to the spot at the horror of the conviction that he lived days, and months, and years, without hope, without pleasure, without God! Yes, while we are in pursuit of worldly things alone, we remove Providence from before us: we enter into business of profit, of aggrandizement, and renown, without his aid being asked for. Our own intelligence is to guide us—our own perseverance is to overcome difficulties—our own industry is to demand success. Happy, then, will it be for us, if we do not wait until all our hopes are dashed to the ground,—until disappointment has soured our taste for life and its issues. Why should not the youth learn to love his God? Why should not the joyous bridegroom and the happy bride bow in humble adoration before the Giver of life? Why should not the wealthy merchant prostrate himself in thankfulness for the good which has been bestowed on him, the undeserving? Why should not the phi-

losopher, in the midst of his discoveries, which will immortalize his name, lift up his heart to the One above, who giveth understanding to the wise, and revealeth secrets to the sons of man? Why should not the man of power fall down in the dust before the One by whose will princes rule, and whose are the dominion from generation to generation? Yes, how beautiful would it be—what a delightful spectacle would it present, were all alike to be active in worshipping God, as all are alike sent on earth by Him. How happy would it be, would all who have sinned acknowledge their fault, and seek again the God whom they have forsaken, and come again to worship with that renewed innocence, as they did when first they lisped their prayers as they learned them pillowed on the bosom of their mother. O how bright would the earth be—what an Eden would the whole world present—and how peacefully would Israel pursue its mission to propagate the word of God, and plant his standard in view of all the nations! And yet it is the business of each to return to God,—to depart from the evil which he loves. Let it then be yours, brothers in faith! to commence the new year with a firm resolve to follow God's teaching, and to obey his voice with all your heart and all your soul. And may He, the Father of all creatures, listen to the voice of your prayer, forgive your iniquity, and bless you with his grace and mercy, renewing to you the coming year with joy and gladness, contentment and competency, and grant you his covenant of peace, even for the sake of his great and holy Name. Amen.

Elul 29th. } 5608.
Sept. 27th. }

DISCOURSE III.

AN ECHO OF THE PROPHETS.

O Thou! whose blessing covers the fields with plenty, and crowns the trees with the swelling fruit, have mercy on thy flock, the people whom Thou hast chosen, and fill their granaries with thy bounty; and let thy plentifulness attend all their labours in the city and the field, and command for them success when they come in and when they go out; so that they may not need the aid of flesh of blood, but be fed solely from thy hand; that their food may come in abundance before they need it, and their garments be ready for them in season before they require them. Thus will they be relieved from the slavery of dependence on man, and their mind will be free from the interruption of anxious care for their daily bread, and they will have leisure to devote themselves to thy service, that it may be well with them and their families always; inasmuch as Thou blessest those who fear Thee, and leavest not those unprotected who seek thy aid in the sincerity of their heart. Yea, be with us whilst we sojourn on thy earth, and leave us not without opportunities to earn thy favour in the world to come, in the life without end or shadow, where the righteous live forever, and bask unceasingly in the holy light of thy countenance, which is the desire of the angels and the holy ones whom Thou hast created. Amen.

BRETHREN!

What is our mission as Jews? what is it as men? From a superficial view we might imagine that there existed a difference in the two problems thus presented to us; but if we look deeper into the subject, we will discover that both melt into one, and have the self-same end to be reached in solving them properly. Let us take a text from the prophet Ezekiel as the basis of our contemplation, on which to establish the superstructure which we desire to see exhibited before us. We read in the section appointed to be read as appropriate for this day, as follows:

והתגדלתי והתקדשתי ונודעתי לעיני גוים רבים
וידעו כי אני ה׳ : יחז׳ לח׳ כג׳ :

"And I will exalt and sanctify myself, and I will be manifested in the sight of many nations; and they shall know that I am the Lord." Ezek. xxxviii. 23.

It is here declared that the Lord intends displaying his power and holiness before the eyes of the masses of mankind who compose the nations, that they may thereby learn to discover that He is indeed the Supreme Ruler, the sole Creator and Preserver of all things, and that no other power exists besides Him, or can maintain itself in opposition to his decrees. This is the will of God; this is the view of the future which is revealed to us: and though the time may be far distant, it is well defined in the dark recesses of coming events, which are laid open only to Him who sees alike the past, present, and future; whose existence is not bounded by space and time, and who

therefore has all possible existence spread out before Him, and nothing escapes his all-seeing eye. But though we cannot see the end of things, we can at least labour to promote its arrival by our feeble human aid. It is true we are mortal—our very breath is drawn in pain and sorrow; we are ignorant of the consequences of the very steps which we take. Nevertheless, we have a mission, an appointment in the world, which we must and can pursue in accordance with the great plan of the universal Father, for the promotion of his kingdom and the establishing of the knowledge of himself, which we are told by his prophets it is his purpose to diffuse among all mankind. To suppose that we are here merely for ourselves,—that we can, if we would, stand still in the path of life without regarding the masses around us,—would presuppose that a man could be independent, isolated in life, without sympathy, without influence. But the most cursory observation contradicts this: everybody receives and conveys impressions, and it is questionable whether even an idiot is without some influence on others. We know not how ideas are excited; we know as little how they are conveyed abroad to others, nor where the starting-point is whence new thoughts are carried into the channels formerly overrunning with those of a different or opposite nature; consequently we cannot determine who and what are the best instruments whom the Lord may select to effect his purposes. The Psalmist says, "The stone which the builders despised hath become the chief corner-stone;" and in the same strain may we allege that the humblest individual, only if he be blest by his Sender, can effect that good

which the most powerful intellect will fail of attaining. Let us, therefore, be ever so little in our eyes or those of the world, we may still say, without being guilty of arrogance or undue pride, that we have been selected for a wise purpose to be God's witnesses; and, what is more, we may maintain that our labours will succeed, and that though now the fewest of nations, as we have always been since our first selection, the time will come when we shall become "praised, famed, and glorious, as also a holy people to the Lord our God, as He hath spoken;" since the Almighty's will never fails of working out its own purposes, let the fulfilment be delayed even so long, that men in their blind ignorance say that the time will never arrive; because we know that his are not eyes of flesh, and that He does not work as men work; for all power is his, and time and eternity are before Him alike.

We have now a twofold proposition before us: God purposes a universal sanctification of all mankind, and that we shall be his instruments. The first idea is one of vast and far-reaching importance, nothing less than the whole human race being included; the second merely regards the instruments: and who can say of them with justice to the great Master—"Thy labourers are not worthy of thy grace?" Truly may we confess the latter mortifying fact to our shame. We have received a high destiny,—still we have valued more the gewgaws and glitter of the world, than the favour of Heaven and the promotion of the objects of our mission! Nevertheless, this does not impeach the wisdom of our God, nor say that his intentions will ultimately prove fruitless.

For, as He said through his prophet, his word will not return again from the earth without prospering in that, for which He has sent it, as little as the rain and snow fail in fructifying the earth.

The question then recurs, What are we to do as God's missionaries? how act as individual Israelites? Even as the Lord has commanded us in his law; and in doing so we fulfil in the best manner our own calling as members of the divine household, and as messengers of good tidings to all the earth. As individuals we are children of salvation, of a beatitude unspeakably glorious, interminably enduring. To obtain this, we must be active in doing good, courageous in subduing our passions, attentive in learning what the All-father has taught us; and only when we have to the utmost learned our duty, struggled with our baser nature, and wrought well in the task of beneficence and holiness, can we say that we have well-grounded hopes that our God will approve our service, and accept us in his presence, and place us within his sanctuary as those who have fulfilled his holy behests; who have walked humbly, because He is high; who have mastered their passions, because He had taught them the right way; and who have laboured for the good of mankind, because He who loves all his creatures had so commanded them to be merciful to all those to whom He is merciful. In this individual striving for holiness because our God is holy, there is no selfish egotism, no hating of those who are less righteous; because even they, who are far below us in the scale of merit, are nevertheless, not less than we, creatures of the same Creator, amenable to Him, not to us, for the

result of their acts, unless by a special legislation He has transferred to us the right of sitting in judgment on their transgressions, or the good of society demands that they should be punished as criminals whose deeds may countervene the general welfare. This latter condition can, however, not affect those acts which may be termed deeds of piety, in which man acts only in relation to God, without thereby doing anything which affects mankind at large. In these, therefore, no man has a right to interfere as avenger of the Most High, unless special permission has been delegated, and then it must be solely because it is commanded, not for man to say that he assumes the right to judge the conscience of his fellow-mortal. You will therefore observe in our whole law *no opinion* surrendered to the power of the judges; acts, open deeds only, as being matters of evidence to the eyes and ears, could be investigated by the tribunals, and they could only then condemn, when the guilt was so clearly established, that the accused himself could not do otherwise than admit the justice of the verdict, without being called upon in the first place to criminate himself by the words of his own mouth. It is accordingly our duty to be as righteous as we can; we must daily endeavour to be active in our persons to do acts of holiness and benevolence, and to improve our mind with such knowledge and contemplations as will bring God present to our soul, by which the fear of Him will become deeper and deeper impressed on our spirit, by which means again we shall learn daily better how to follow his guidance; because we then shall know that all which He

asks of us is for our own happiness, that it may be well with us all the days.

Now as the holy law gives us no other duties to perform as a nation than those which are prescribed to the individual, one thing follows, that as God's missionaries we have to pursue the same course as we do in character of candidates for salvation. If as the latter we are to endeavour to acquire the utmost attainable perfection, and to love our fellows with a sincere affection, serve them without hopes of reward, and not molest them though they differ from us in conduct and opinion, except with the sole limitation already mentioned:—it follows accordingly that, in our position as God's witnesses, we must be holy in our persons, consistent in our conduct, but at the same time active in serving all whom our acts can at all benefit, and be only courageous in defending the truth when it is assailed, without ever daring to hate mankind, or what is still worse, force them by persecutions and penal laws to adopt our mode of thinking, or to act as we do in obedience to the law which we have received. It may therefore deeply grieve you to see our holy Sabbath universally violated by men: yet you have no right to compel them to rest; as the day was only given as a sign between the Creator and Israel, that we might thereby acknowledge that we believe in Him as the Originator of the world. Whereas now this command has not been given to the nations of the earth, what is it to us that they know not the rest of the Lord? Let us bless his providence for having pointed out to us the way of light, and let us not hate nor coerce those who have not been so instructed in the duties which were first

given to our fathers. Where was the force which the Almighty employed in teaching us the law? Were there not sixty times ten thousand freemen who accepted voluntarily to serve their eternal Benefactor? Whence then the right to hate and persecute those who differ from us? But no; the greater the ignorance of the world in matters of holiness, the greater should be our charity towards all. It is only by mercy that God acquired us for his portion; it is only therefore by the same means that hearts can be won by his servants.

"But how is this to be effected?" will be the next question. This is not so easy of solution, because herein the Bible gives us but few indications, and examples are not numerous of the intercourse of the prophets with the gentiles, to act as a firm guide in this perplexing matter. That through us all the nations of the earth are to be blessed, as God foretold to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and repeated again through Moses, is not for a moment to be doubted. The idol-worship may be rooted ever so deeply; the idol-temples may stand ever so firmly; but the one will vanish and the other will be rendered desolate, and all through our agency; because Isaiah says, in his chapter xliii. verse 21: "This people have I formed for myself; they shall declare my praise." But whether this is to be effected by our simple presence on earth, or by our ultimately standing forward as missionaries in the glorious work of the regeneration of the world, does not so clearly appear. But from the example of the prophets, with the sole exception of Jonah, we should say that they never acted as actual missionaries to the gentiles; and in his in-

stance, too, it was not to convert the people of Nineveh to the faith of Israel, but to warn them against the violence and injustice which had been committed there, acts against which the simple moral law first given to Noah already energetically bore a testimony of condemnation. Still the mission of Jonah proves not only that the nations of the East in those times knew of the Lord and confided in his prophets,—which was also exemplified in the case when Ben-Hadad sent his general to consult the prophet Elisha, who was then at Damascus, but that the Lord himself has not relinquished caring for the welfare of the nations of the earth, because He has selected our people as his peculiar treasure, and that their salvation is surely within his intentions, and that in his own time they will be all gathered to his fold. But it is also certain that we have not received any special command to preach the law and the testimony to others than Israelites, while we were especially exhorted not alone to be faithful each to his trust, but to teach our children that they might learn to fear the Lord. We may therefore deduce from all this that, till a special call shall be made on us, we are to abstain from seeking to convert others to our faith—not to reject those who voluntarily join themselves to the house of Jacob, for ours is a universal house of prayer, and all who wish are welcome to enter thither and adore the Father of mercy. But it would appear only that, under the present circumstances of the world, we are not to go abroad to seek to make converts to our religion, but to await quietly and hopefully the time of the universal adoption of the yoke of Heaven. This, however, does not say that our ideas will not spread be-

cause of our inactivity; for the reverse we find to be the case, if we will but scan the records of history. The Bible was first ours in the vernacular tongue of our people; and now see how it has been multiplied in the languages of almost every race, partly by the direct action of the fugitives of Jacob who, in order that the law might not be forgotten by those born in captivity, and to whom the language of Heber is unknown, translated the words into those more familiar to the scattered remnants in the various new homes they had acquired:—partly, however, by the efforts of those who, having borrowed their light from us, and having been refreshed in a minor degree by the fountain through which we exist, now endeavour to scatter the seed yet farther, and to dig yet more channels, that the believers in the law may be multiplied, and the holy stream be carried yet wider, and wider, and wider over the earth. It is true, they do not do this from any love to our own religion; they have the inventions of men, whom God has not sent, on which they rely for support, and which they wish to propagate along with the word of life. It is also true that they love not Israel, though they acknowledge that we are the first-born of the Lord in the faith. It is also true that they have been the most inveterate foes of Jacob's children, that they have slaughtered thousands on thousands of innocents, whose sole crime was that they loved the Lord with all their soul, and were ready to die sooner than associate in his worship another god who does not exist. All this is true; but at the same time, despite of themselves, they diffuse the very healing balm through which the ultimate triumph of truth will be accomplished; they carry

the word of God over deserts and oceans, and with it the antidote to the very errors they are intent on propagating with so much zeal, with such unwearied perseverance.

I do not exaggerate in the least the blessed effects of the Bible; let the versions thereof be ever so defective, and let the distributors thereof be actuated by ever so selfish motives, and hatred of Israel: they *do* still propagate the truth despite of themselves, and with their errors which they love, and for the furtherance of which they labour so devotedly, they furnish the world with that wholesome food which will ultimately invigorate fallen man, so that he will stand regenerated and new-born in the presence of his Maker. Look back a few centuries, and take up a book of chronicles written by the greatest admirer of papal power, the impiously called vicegerent of a divine being on earth; and then compare the state of knowledge on the subject of the Godhead now and then prevailing; at the time when the precious Scriptures were slowly transcribed by hand, and found only in the recondite Latin or Greek, and accessible only to the recluses or the paid ministers of the church of Rome, and now when by the process of typography they are made the property in a hundred dialects of the poorest peasant, and not rarely of the slave even, whilst millions of transcripts to supply the increasing demand are thrown off by the magic power of steam, only lately made subservient to the will of man in the progress of wonderful invention: and you must confess that the change has been rapid, almost miraculous; because the lowest superstition, the most degrading subserviency, have yielded to a progress of

enlightenment, and an extension of human rights then believed to be beyond attainment, and merely looked upon as the dreams of enthusiastic philanthropists. This has been the achievement of a three centuries' possession of the Scriptures, of a book preserved by us with jealous care, watched over with more than a maternal fondness, so that no error or interpolation might creep in to dim the bright surface of the divine mirror, in which we see reflected the past and the future, as they are made known by our God; it has stridden in victory over prostrate thrones, it has conquered opinions and doctrines deeply implanted in the hearts of man: and will you say that its power is exhausted, that its last triumph has been achieved? And then again, I pray you, look at our then and present situation. Then we were compelled to hide our knowledge; but few of the bearers of power deigned to inquire of us what the Lord had taught; our philosophy, our religious sciences were despised; but at present the mist is gradually rising; men begin (but only begin) to appreciate our rights; they commence to discover that there is beauty in Israel; they come to ask of us the way of life; they say that salvation is of the Jews. And is all this nothing? Is this the end, the consummation of all that is to come? They who believe and profess this, have no knowledge of history, and have no confidence in the word of God. Man never stands still; he is progressing or retrograding; and unless all that has come to pass is merely to vanish and leave the world again to darkness, and oppression, and tyranny, and universal slavery, it must progress to a greater perfection, to a liberation of the mind by the one standard

which the Bible promises—the knowledge of the one God, on that day when He shall be acknowledged as One, and the world will adore the Eternal One alone, and He be called One in the mouth of all flesh, as He is now invoked in the assemblies of Israel. Now errors in politics and religion sow discord and dissensions among mankind; injustice and ignorance as yet inflict their evils on the helpless, and even those who bear rule on earth. But are we to say that no farther change is yet to be wrought? that now all has been accomplished of which man is capable? that the sighs of the oppressed are never to cease? Yet as regards the Scriptures, they emphatically declare that a new state of things shall be brought about in the first place for Israelites as the possessors of God's word, and then for the gentiles, who are to be brought under the same banner which has so long waved over us,—and all analogy proves that these promises could not have been made in vain.

Now in conclusion we come to the point of Jewish teachers of righteousness to the gentiles. This too the prophet Isaiah foresaw in his second chapter, when he says: "For from Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Consequently it is the intention of the Lord that through our means a direct instruction is to come to pass among the gentiles. But we are nevertheless left in doubt whether they are solely to come, as there indicated, to the house of God to be taught, or whether we are to travel over the earth to convert it, in the first instance. Whatever be the ultimate destiny of our race, however, is a mere matter of speculation, as far as this point is concerned; should it be time for

us to be summoned to the great work, a spirit will be infused into us, irresistible, though strongly resisted, to urge us on to the consummation of our destiny; for the spirit that once spoke through Moses is yet potent and undiminished in vigour. In the meantime it is evidently our duty to sanctify the name of the Lord, to exhibit by a consistent religious conduct the beauties of holiness as imposed on us through obedience to the law. In this way will the world see the fructifying effects of an enlightened religion, free from fanatical zeal, free from mysticism; and men will be drawn aside from error, and strive to obtain wisdom from the Word that dwells with us; and thus will we pave the way for God's kingdom, and preach by our silent example eloquent lessons of godliness and truth, and we shall bring near the hoped-for days of the Messiah, when the Lord alone will reign in all hearts. Amen.

Tishry 14th. } 5609.
Oct'br 12th. }

DISCOURSE IV.

WALKING BEFORE GOD.

FATHER of man and Creator of holy ones! give ear to our prayer, and hide not thyself from our supplications. Behold! we are few and unprotected, and the evils of the world come over our heads like the billows of the ocean, and new dangers constantly

threaten our peace and our permanence. But Thou, Guardian of Israel! hast ever watched over us, from the day that Abraham went forth from his father's house until this hour, and we are here to bless thy Name. Be with us then in this generation also, and let the new war of opinions pass over us and leave us unharmed, as when Thou commandedst the destroyer to stay his hand when Thou wentest forth to smite the first-born of Egypt. Not on our wisdom do we rely to save the flock from the jaws of the devourer; for our best knowledge is but foolishness before Thee; only on thy light and aid do we depend for support, to guide us truly to the haven of rest in thy presence, where all that is now dark will be rendered clear, and all doubts be removed by the wisdom which is in Thee. Save us also, O God of our salvation! and gather us from the people, and snatch us from destruction to give thanks to thy holy Name, and to glory in thy praise. Amen.

Brethren!

When Abraham was ninety and nine years old, God appeared to him and spoke to him these remarkable words:

אני אל שדי התהלך לפני והיה תמים : בר' י"ז א' :

"I am the Almighty God, walk before me and be thou perfect," Gen. xvii. 1,

thereby demanding of him, in a few words, the fulfilment of duties, giving simply as a reason that God himself was almighty. There must therefore be a close connexion between the divine power and man's

duties, or else the Scriptures would have assigned some other motive as the foundation of religion; and as this has not been done, we may be sure that the cause assigned is the real basis of righteousness. We speak of piety, righteousness, religion, duty, obedience, resignation, humanity, and truthfulness, as though they were different mental qualities arising from different sources of action; whereas they are all referable, in their pure state, to one single principle, and this the fear, and consequent love of God; and the deeper we have entered into the absolute veneration of our heavenly Father, the greater will be the distinction between us and those who do not fear Him, in all that ennobles and elevates the human character. The Almighty therefore placed before Abraham a high aim, and assigned him a reason for pursuing it to the end of his life. It is, "Walk before me and be thou perfect," because that He the Lord "is the Almighty God." To express a God-pleasing course, the Scriptures use the phrases "walking with," "before" and "after God," all having the meaning to follow out the path which the Lord ordains, which again means to do all the acts which are pleasing to Him, and to avoid all those which He calls evil. You know already that the revelation of his will, communicated to the world at various periods, gives us the knowledge of these respective actions; and when therefore it is said that such a one walked with God, or the like, we shall at once understand that he was obedient to all the duties which his knowledge of divine things demanded of Him. Though therefore Hanoch (Enoch) and Noah, of whom the Bible speaks in this way, may not have been instructed to the

same extent as we of the present day are (but of this we have not sufficient knowledge to speak with any degree of certainty), they were nevertheless acceptable, because they were obedient according to the light permitted to them at that age of the world. The words "walk before me" then mean simply that man is, so to say, to walk on his way, and constantly turn back to the Lord, who is represented as being close behind him, for advice how to pursue his journey; and "after the Lord your God ye shall walk," means that the Holy One is represented as leading the way carefully, marking out every step, before man takes it, who is thus able to walk along securely, without fear of going astray, or to suffer any injury from concealed dangers which might beset his path; whereas the first phrase, "a man walked with God," may mean that, being as yet unused to divine knowledge, not having yet many examples of holiness in others to direct him, he required and obtained by his readiness to obey a constant and immediate divine aid to enable him to fulfil his duty.—This last therefore is the expression applied to the early saints who, as said, had not yet a written law, nor many holy examples to guide them, nor again a striking manifestation of the divine displeasure against sinners, such as the flood and the confusion of tongues were in subsequent times. Abraham, however, had already before him all these, both the rewards and punishments, the amount of traditionary precepts had also been enlarged; he was therefore able to pass along more securely than his predecessors, and he had only to refer in any emergency to the God who was never far away to guide him when needed. Whereas the

Israelites after their deliverance from Egypt, and the evident revelation of the Lord on Sinai, when the Decalogue was first written on the two tables of stone, and the entire law, multiplied in many copies, was next so generally diffused among all classes, had the path of life clearly marked out to them; their God was actually walking before them in his word to point out to them the whole way; and they were therefore commanded, because they were enabled to do so, to follow after the Lord, by which means they would to a surety obtain the happiness for which they were destined.—So much simply in exposition of the variation in the phraseology in the words of Scripture, which always should arrest our attention, and which it is our business to elucidate, if our information will permit us to do so.

But let us return to our text: Abraham, the destined father of a great people, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, bore in his own life a strong prefiguration of the fate of his descendants. Like them, he was a wanderer for a great portion of his life, an exile from his father's house; like them, he was often put in fear of his neighbours, and had to defend himself against their secret evil intentions; like them, he received a law for his guidance; and, like them, too, his faith was tried variously, and on every occasion he was proved true, and came out brighter from the fire at each time that his integrity was tested. The whole life of our people, from our origin to our attaining the end of our task, is one of vicissitude and progress; and throughout there has been and is a strong manifestation of providential care and kindness; and in the same measure was the

career of our progenitor one of progress from the time he was first selected as the harbinger of a better generation, till he was ready to sacrifice the child of his age to the behest of his Master. The Israelites were told that they should be perfect with the Lord their God; and equally so was Abraham ordered to deport himself in order to attain the object of his existence. And precisely this is the chief end of our being, the crowning of the creation of man on earth; every act which he does, and every change he meets with, have only for object that he may rise to a higher degree; and hence does the royal preacher well say, "A good name is better than precious oil, and the day of death better than the day of man's birth," because he in acting righteously has acquired for himself enduring happiness, and his spirit is placed in a higher perfection than it was on the day he first saw the light of the world. The same will also be the case with Israel. We stood high in the divine favour when we received the law at Sinai; but higher far will we be esteemed when "the ransomed of the Lord shall return to Zion with song, when everlasting joy shall be on their heads, and when sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

So this was to be the task of Abraham, to become perfect; and the means of his doing so were also indicated, that is, he was to walk before the Lord, or, as we have explained it, he was constantly to turn to Him and his revelation for guidance, and to do that only which he was certified to be pleasing in the eyes of the Lord. The reason was also given: "I am the Almighty God," and herewith had Abraham pointed out to himself and his descendants the whole

reason of godliness. It is not a mortal who demands of us to be active in his service; it is not one of a brief period on earth who tells us to forego our pleasures in order to please him; it is not one of limited power who bids to do that which is unpleasant to us, and imposes a task on us by the potency of his to us irresistible power; on the contrary, it is the Eternal One who calls us to his service; it is the Unending in days who tells us to listen to his instruction, so that we may not follow blindly the impulses of our passions; and it is at last the Most High whose power pervades all, from whose all-seeing eye no one can escape, who admonishes us to follow his guidance, not because that we may mortify our will or undergo needless hardships, but in order that we may become perfect through obedience. All this moreover is not to pass unheeded by Him and uselessly to us; but He is the God Almighty, therefore capable of sustaining us under all difficulties, and to regulate all that occurs so that it may contribute to our ultimate advantage; for rewards are with Him, and He will recompense his servants to the utmost desire of their heart when the proper period has arrived; He will make for them straight the crooked paths, level for them mountain-heights, and from the depths of sorrow He will bring them enlargement, and life from the midst of death.—Whatever sacrifice, therefore, we make in the service of the Lord has always this peculiar effect, it subdues our desires and gives us the mastery of ourselves; it brings down the tumultuous heaving of the rebellious heart to the control of reason, and enables us to become more tranquil, more resigned, and more ready to be a blessing to all around us. In,

therefore, becoming more ceremonially religious, yes, in laying Tefillin, and wearing Zitzith, and placing a Mezuzah on the door-posts of our houses and of our gates, we learn to reverence the Father of men, by yielding our impulses to his instruction; since we obey because He commands, and we yield our prepossessions for idleness and enjoyment, not as *we* would think of pleasing Him by making great sacrifices and striving to accomplish some mighty deed to show our love and gratitude, but we do, as He commands, little things, deeds of easy accomplishment, and we offer them as the only incense which He desires, as the fruits of implicit obedience. If next great acts have to be accomplished; if our rebellious heart swells with higher passions; if revenge in all its hateful deformity demands the blood of a brother to be shed, or to lay in ashes blooming gardens and fruitful fields: the spirit once subdued to its Creator's behests will put on the armour of faith, and strive successfully, triumphantly, with the power of sin, and forgive the injury, love again the enemy, and scatter good abroad instead of letting loose the demon of strife and destruction. Therefore did God say to Abraham, "Walk before me;" be always, in mind, in the presence of Almighty Power; feel nothing, think nothing, do nothing, which He could disapprove of—feel, think, and do all as He commands; because thou art mortal, insufficient in reason, weak in power, whilst He is immortal, most wise, and infinite in strength. And hence, though thou shouldst succumb in death before thy ardent hopes are verified, He still survives to reward thy spirit and to lead thee, disembodied and rendered thus again a being of a

brighter life, to joys of which thy mortal vision has no conception, and to give thee delights which thy senses are not capable of measuring. Hence, though thou shouldst not understand the reason for the act which thou shalt perform, be assured that thy God, who commands Thee the same, understands the bearing it has on all the entire chain of thy existence, and that it will tend ultimately to improve thy soul, and increase thy happiness. Hence though thou shouldst feel thyself unable to accomplish any important thing, through the greatest efforts thou art empowered to make, during the whole of thy existence, be assured that his might will regulate all so that the end shall be just what He designs, and which in the best manner will fulfil the desires of thy heart, and increase thy happiness to the utmost of thy capacity for enjoyment.

It is in this manner that the power of God is the surest base for our piety; inasmuch as it presents to us the highest Object of adoration in his mercy and goodness, giving us reasons for, and the means of acquiring happiness; wherefore we must feel drawn towards Him by the ties of love and gratitude, and become anxious to do something to merit in a slight degree, however slight, the superabundant love of which we are the recipients. This will result in righteousness; inasmuch as we shall then measure our acts by the standard which God has given us in his revealed religion; we shall accordingly cheerfully fulfil our duty, in being obedient in all things, and resign our reason to God's wisdom, and submit unyieldingly to his decree, let this mete out to us bodily ease or suffering, worldly prosperity or misfortune, sure as

we then must be that all will tend to the utmost perfection of our nature and our highest ultimate happiness.—And if we are so in our walk with God, our conduct towards men will partake of the character becoming servants of the Most High. Wherever we find sorrow, we shall hasten to assuage it; wherever there is distress, we shall be anxious to remove it; wherever there are tears, we shall be sedulous to wipe them from the mourner's cheek, and we shall endeavour to be in an humble degree imitators of God, to dispense blessing and joy to the utmost of our means. And though no eye sees us, save that of God alone; though no ear hears us, save that of Almighty Power: we shall speak the truth as it is in our heart, not wrong our neighbour though he know it not, nor acquire any greatness which may become unjustly injurious to the welfare of our fellow-man.

Now, no man is altogether free from guilt; hence we cannot claim for Abraham even an exemption from human failings; religion is given accordingly to purify the evil tendencies of our inclinations; and if Abraham, in comparing him with the standard we have received, should appear occasionally deficient in the highest efforts of piety, we may freely say that he failed in common with all men. But if we survey his whole life, as briefly given to us in Scripture, we must unhesitatingly pronounce him the man pre-eminently worthy of becoming through his children a blessing to all the families of the earth. Follow him from the day he left Haran, till he disappears from the active stage of life with the marriage of his son Isaac, and you will find him the same man of humility, of peace, resignation, benevolence, disinterestedness, and tol-

eration. He felt himself dust and ashes, though the world called him great; he loved peace, though he had ample power to assert his claims by the means of the sword; he was resigned to make every sacrifice to the dictates of his religion, not even sparing his own child, when supposing himself in the discharge of a duty; his whole intercourse with his kin and strangers proved his benevolence and disinterestedness; and when notified that grievous sinners were doomed to punishment, how earnestly did he pray that even the small number of ten righteous men might be permitted to screen the doomed cities from destruction. We are apt to call the days of our ancestor a dark age; but if we may take *his* life as an evidence, we should pronounce a high encomium on the elevated position which humanity had then attained. But again, we must not take it for granted that all were equal, or approached in the least the great example on which we are dwelling; for he shone forth as a bright star in the cloud-covered evening-sky when all portends a coming storm, and it alone rejoices the eye of the beholder in its increased lustre as compared with the gloom which overspreads all around. —Let us, therefore, adore the goodness of God who chose the sage of Chaldea to perpetuate the belief in his being among mankind, who snatched him from the midst of idolaters to diffuse on earth the spirit of truth and godliness; and let us also deeply feel the glorious privilege which is ours of being the descendants of this holy man, not alone in the flesh, but also in the spirit, as we, like him, call on the One Sole Eternal God to save us, as we, like him, worship

no one but the Creator of the universe. Let us also prove to the world, that we are not unworthy of such an ancestry. Let our conduct, both as men and Israelites, correspond with the bright example which was set us in the early ages of the world, and let us not do aught which could cast a stigma on our name and character. Whatever sin towards God we are guilty of proves, that we are not entire with Him, that we do not follow Him on the path of faith which He bids us pursue. And whatever wrong we inflict on men also proves, that we have not yet learned to suppress revenge, and a love for gain, and a desire for idle indulgence, whilst it ought to be the study of every Israelite to love mercy, to do justice, and to walk humbly before his God.—Let us reflect how greatly Abraham's faith was tried. When he was about eighty years old, he was told that from him should descend a nation holy to the service of God. Yet years passed on, and he felt that the son of Hagar was not the child through whom the blessing was to be accomplished. And now he was on the verge of a century, when he was notified that he was not yet perfect, and that all his former acts of piety and humanity left yet something unaccomplished. He was told that God would make a covenant with him, and cause him to become exceedingly numerous in his descendants; but on the condition that he and all to spring from him should adopt the token of the outward covenant, in the circumcision of all the males of his family to the latest generation. Abraham did not complain; he did not inquire, why at so late a period in his life only this painful command had been imposed on him. It was enough for him that the

Lord commanded, and he immediately obeyed, and induced obedience in all his household, as he had been ordered to do. He stood firm in his faith, and obedience crowned the trust which he felt in his heart; and he thus set us the example of uncomplaining submission to the instruction of the Lord, though we may not see the least reason for the precepts we have received.—O that we all might be animated by the same docile spirit! that we all might excel in wisdom, and yet follow submissively the instruction which our religion gives us! How happy would Israel be, were one heart and one soul to dwell in them all to follow the guidance of the Lord, and how speedily would we then attract, by the brightness of our example, the nations who yet walk in darkness.—Yet we are sinning, and many of us disregard their Abrahamic birthright, and refuse to confess themselves his children through the token of the covenant. How grievous is such sin, where a father cuts off his own offspring, and induces him to have no name, no inheritance, no share in the sanctuary of the Lord; and how small must be that faith, which will hesitate in obedience in a matter of such weight and importance. But all ye who are faithful, who have received the seal of the covenant, do not offend the holy Spirit by your neglect of what is your duty by birth and faith; live holy, be perfect, because the Lord is holy and perfect; depend on his bounty, because He is good and merciful; be firm and true, because He is almighty, and will reward you with an exceedingly great blessing, and give you the light of his countenance, unending peace, undying felicity, in that bright world where righteousness will obtain its true reward, and

where He will cause to approach to Him those who are holy, who have faithfully done his will. Amen.

Heshvan 7th. } 5609.
November 8d. }

DISCOURSE V.

THE EXAMPLE OF ISRAEL.

FATHER of Israel! we have felt thy providence, we have enjoyed thy bounty, and are thy chosen servants to fulfil the objects of thy rule on earth, to prepare the world for thy kingdom, and to proclaim the message of salvation, until that happy hour when wickedness shall close its mouth, and thy faith and thy law shall become the watchword of all mankind. O glorious is such a lot! blissful is such a mission! But now Jacob is lowly, and Israel degraded, and the nations imagine us stricken with darkness, and our mental vision obscured by the veil of blindness; because we cannot discern truth in their errors, and because we cannot forsake Thee our God, and the teaching of thy law which Thou didst bestow on us. Yet Thou art the One who wilt raise Jacob though he is now small and humble, and Thou wilt kindle anew the lamp of thy anointed the son of Jessé, that thy glory may dwell again in Jerusalem, and much peace may be in her palaces. Yet whilst the ungodly prevail many hearts become faint, and the unwise despair of thy coming to save and to redeem

thy heritage. Be it therefore acceptable before Thee to cause us to feel thy worship in our hearts, and guide us by unerring tokens of thy mercy; that we may stand unmoved in the midst of the assault of the stranger, and await in patience thy coming, when the righteous shall rejoice, and all the earth be glad in thy salvation. Yea, aid and forsake us not; because we are thy children, the people whom Thou chosest for the sake of the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, thy servants. Amen.

BRETHREN!

Were it that our nation had not received a permanent mission, it would long since have been abandoned by Providence to seek its fate as other people, become commercial or agricultural, enslaved or independent, warlike or peaceable, civilized or barbarous, as the progress of events might urge it forward, or it might have disappeared altogether from the earth as a distinct race, just as it happened to the Romans and Chaldeans, and many other nations of antiquity, or modern times. But we find that our fate was not such, that we were not left to chance to seek our position in the scale of humanity; but an observer of the course of events will discern without much labour a uniform thread running through our whole history, and this is the religious element, which more than any other people places us before the world as a separate and particular branch among the families of the earth. It is true that we are a peculiar race through our descent from a common parentage; that our features and visage bear a marked contrast to those of other men, so that the Jewish physiognomy

is readily distinguishable in by far the larger portion of our members; but this does not, for all that, constitute the characteristic of the Jewish people, and forms barely a mark of their descent from a stock deriving its origin from a distant and foreign land, and is very often shared by nations living under an analogous climate to that which our fathers inhabited. Whatever physical characteristics may be ours, however, could only have been preserved unchanged through a close union among ourselves, and the exclusion of foreign admixture; for it would have been impossible to maintain, for instance, the peculiar conformation of features which generally denote the Jew, if he had derived his descent from all sorts of nations; since in this case he would naturally be tinctured by the peculiar marks of other races. But how could such a union be maintained? You may answer, By an absolute prevention of all intermarriage with other nationalities. But it is very evident that, however this might have been possible whilst we formed a state of our own in Palestine, with political power and an independent civil government, which might, if it had thought fit, denied the entrance of all foreigners into the state, as did the Chinese till lately, and as do the people of Japan to this very day, it would have been entirely impossible as soon as we had lost our nationality, and became intimately mixed up with the people of nearly every state under the sun, which did not disdain to receive our wanderers in its boundaries. Besides this consideration another one must present itself to our investigation; it is this, that strangers were not precluded from living in Palestine, and what is more, from being received as

members of the state, and even of families of Israelites; there were restrictions and conditions under which citizenship in its full extent, and household membership, could be obtained; but they were by no means very difficult of attainment, and the way to a union with Jews was left open to all who chose to become candidates for the same. Whoever then says that Jews have preserved themselves by their unsociable rejection of all foreign alliance, assigns the effect instead of the cause for the mighty and wonderful moral phenomenon which they present in the records of history; since the causes of their, what many call, unsocial habits have to be sought in the very principle to which they owe their being, and this is, as we have said already, the religion which is theirs. We may freely assert that we are physically and mentally differently constituted from any other people; we may say that we repel any approach to foreign alliance; but we may safely deny that it is owing to a hatred of mankind, which induces us not to forego voluntarily our identity, or that it is a wish to be singular which governs us in our seclusion. The reason however is only, that we have received a religion as a heavenly deposit, and which, in our preserving it for us and our descendants, as our fathers guarded it for themselves and us their successors, necessarily compels us to exclude ourselves from a communion with strangers, which could in any way endanger in our hands the possession of our ancestral faith and practice. Were it indeed that, in the course of events, a system had been evolved in all respects equal or superior to our own: it would have been the height of folly to have continued in a state of separa-

tion from the rest of mankind, at a time when we had neither national existence nor a country to call our own; when our glory was all belonging to the past, and our wished-for home was barely a deep-seated hope, burning at times brightly, at times faintly, in our bosoms. What however is it that causes the Israelite, even him who is reckless in religion, and almost unthinking on his God, to start back with horror when contemplating the thought of being lost in his descendants to the household of Jacob? It is the deeply impressed feeling that no law is true but that proclaimed at Sinai; that there is no god, beside Him who redeemed us from Egypt, and no saviour save the One who has promised to show us mercy and goodness whenever we shall return to Him and seek his favour in sincerity, in contrition, and with humble prayer. Yes, far may the Israelite go astray; but it will embitter more than anything else his dying hour, to reflect on the awful position he is in towards his God and his people, when he knows that his children are cut off from the inheritance of the Lord, that they are the uncircumcised of flesh and heart, and worship strange gods, and kneel down at the stranger's shrine. Whence is this horror? whence this deep-seated dread at a loss of an inheritance which has no worldly advantages to offer? which only holds out to its possessor days of watching, and not rarely nights of anguish? It is that every son of Jacob feels that he is, of right and in truth, an inheritor of Divine favour in possessing a knowledge of the UNITY of the Godhead, which was announced in a multitude of visions, and in the majesty of the thunders of Horeb, to generations after generations;

through which means also we obtained an intimate acquaintance with a pure system of morals and rules of worship, than which nothing holier, nothing purer, nothing truer, can be imagined by man, like which nothing equalling it in holiness, purity, and truth, was promulgated elsewhere to the children of the dust. Therefore it is that the Israelite fears losing his right in the universal God, that he dreads being cut off from the inheritance in the blessings which are promised to our race, should his children and their descendants, in whom the ultimate hope of the world ought to be of right accomplished, not be numbered among the seed of Abraham, but be mingled up with those who invoke gods that cannot save, or believe in prophets whom the Lord has not sent. And how can such a one expect to rejoice in the salvation of the God of Israel, should his descendants have been among the persecutors of the faithful, and have been among those who make heavy our burden during our captivity,—if by his own voluntary act, in joining himself or permitting his immediate children to join themselves to the sons and daughters of the strangers, he has deliberately removed himself and them from the household of Jacob? No, he cannot rejoice, neither in anticipation nor in the accomplishment of the return of the Lord to Zion in mercy and glory; and he has no right, no inheritance in the goodness and the abundance of spiritual greatness which shall be ours in the end of days, when truth shall triumph, and when falsehood will vanish before the dazzling light of the Divine reason which will then illuminate the human mind.

Our race, I need not tell you, you know it, has

passed through trials the severest which any other ever encountered; it has been tried in the sunshine of prosperity, and in the crucible of poverty; it has been tempted in the days of national splendour, and its constancy tested in the degradation of abject slavery, and oppressions without number; it has suffered all the vicissitudes of tyrannical rulers, the wrath of man, the hatred of the whole human family; again, however, it has been courted by words of flattery, which sound fair to the ear, but break the faith to the deceived heart; it has been attracted by bribes and promises of all sorts: and nevertheless it has not ceased to be a distinct branch of the human family, though there is no doubt that many strangers to our ancestry have by degrees been joined to us, and learned to swear by the name of Him who dwells on high. And in all these trials many have fallen off from the parent branch; they were either allured by the freedom of gentile manners, the absence of the burden of the law which they saw in others, or they were terrified by the sorrows which they had to endure, and sought for enlargement by denying their God and Saviour, and forswearing their allegiance to his laws. I called your attention on a previous occasion to the remarkable diminution to which we were subject, first by the slaughter of millions at the destruction of the temple, and afterwards by the constant persecutions and legal murders by which it was endeavoured to exterminate us. I do not remind you of this to enkindle in your hearts a hatred of those not believing as we do; but to impress on you, in all sincerity, that the world and its allurements offer no safety to Israel. You may be told that you are loved

for the fathers' sake; that you are admired because you had always the law in your custody; but never believe that, for these benefits to mankind conferred by your religion, our religion is loved by those who have not embraced it. The world and its followers look on you with a jealous eye, and they would think no labour nor effort in vain, which would induce you to surrender it, and if you would but be persuaded to become like other men, and be no longer distinctive sons of Israel. The very fires of persecution were kindled and blazed, not, as they said, to punish our bodies, but to fit our souls for heaven; and though the stake is not now invoked to effect this end, other means are not left untried to produce the same result. Ours is a constant state of warfare with all around; and we must therefore be constantly watchful that the holy citadel which we are appointed to guard suffer no injury from any inimical surprise, let the danger come from whatever quarter it may. But in so guarding, so watching your treasure, there is no need that you should hate those on whom the Divine light has not yet dawned: you are within the safe inclosure; you can walk with security, surrounded as you are by the walls erected around you by Divine wisdom; you can therefore well forgive the wrong done to you in the ignorance of the proud and the prosperous; and if vengeance is to be meted out for the innocent blood which has been shed, await in silence the coming events, and your God will act for you, and his thunders will not sleep when it is requisite for the benefit of all that they should be awakened, and when his holy arm is to be bared for warfare against the ungodly, before the eyes of nations. Of one thing be

assured, and hold fast to it as a priceless truth, that the Lord of all spirits does not look with indifference upon you and your fate; He watches, on the contrary, over your destiny, and directs everything so that it may best contribute to your preservation, the happiness of the world, and the furtherance of his glory among mankind. You are his instruments; you are but as the clay in the hands of the potter; He moulds you to answer to his wise purposes; wherefore you should never presume to rise up in rebellion against Him, and ask Him, "Wherefore dost Thou afflict us?" Were it that uniform prosperity, a uniform security, a uniform state of peace were the best for your spiritual development, it would all be accorded to you, even as your soul desires. The very reverse of it, however, clearly proves, that as yet you have not reached that state of perfection, or that at least the world has not yet progressed far enough, to establish the peace of Israel; that as yet the struggle for truth has to be waged by you, either actively or in a suffering state; and that hence you must acquire such thoughts yourselves, and inculcate the like in your children and scholars, that you and they may be enabled to come out of the contest with your faith untouched, and your confidence in the God of your fathers undiminished.

Reflect that you are, by descent or adoption, children of that glorious triumvirate which was commenced in Abraham, continued in Isaac, and ended in Jacob, three names lustrous and bright amidst the greatest and brightest which the history of the world presents to the admiration of men, and which demand of us to follow them in the same path which has be-

come their glory and their praise. The world boasts of its heroes, its martyrs, its counsellors, its kings, its leaders, its sages; it holds them up to be loved, admired, and followed. And it is right that thus mankind should be incited to noble deeds, which scatter a variety over the dull acts of every-day life, which present us something to live for, very different from the ordinary aimless transactions which centre in self, and which often work injury to all beyond the actor himself, and not rarely on him likewise. But have we not also cause to point to our ancient progenitors as the illustrious examples which we should follow, unflinchingly, bravely, fully, without regarding the consequences which may thereby ensue to us? If Abraham believed firmly in the Lord, should we not also believe, yea unto death, though our eyes do not behold the fulfilment of the good predicted? If Isaac could be willing to be bound on the altar, after he had himself, with a full knowledge of his father's intention, carried the fire and the wood for the burnt-offering, without murmuring against the apparently arbitrary and cruel mandate of the Supreme, though he had been designated as the one after whom Abraham's seed should be called: should we not also be ready to obey, in much less onerous commandments, the guidance of that holy Voice which speaks to us through the pages of the blessed Scriptures? If Jacob could quit as an exile his father's house, banished from the presence of his parents for the wrong done to his brother, though justified for thus doing by this brother's unworthy contempt of his birthright, which he wickedly sold for a mess of pottage, merely to gratify the cravings of a base appetite; if he could go

forth among idolaters and live twenty years away from all the endearing ties which bound him to his beloved mother and revered father, and could he remain himself true and faithful where all around was given to falsehood and error, and rear up his children to love the God of Abraham, and to reverence Him who was the Fear of Isaac; could he remain the favourite of God though the forsaken of man, when he was by day exposed to the scorching rays of the sun on the plains of Mesopotamia, and at night bedewed by the chill, damp, cold mists which often scatter disease and death on the fields which spread along the Tigris and Phrat, and yet always worship Him who appeared to him at Luz, when he slept on the bare ground, with a rock for his pillow, whereas he had been reared in ease and luxury, in the peaceful tent of the patriarch of Beër-sheba; could Jacob remain true, though for a wise purpose an angel sought to overcome him at the crossing of the Jabbok, in a contest such as no mortal ever before waged, and he yet not falter in his confidence in the Supreme's protection: and should we become fainthearted at the first blush of trials, at difficulties which a little well-directed energy and perseverance can so readily overcome? should we doubt that a great and glorious destiny is before us, when so much has already been fulfilled, when so much that was barely prophecy in the days of the fathers, has actually been accomplished to the letter? And yet we doubt, we fancy almost, as did the ancient transgressors, that the Lord has forsaken the land; we hesitate in obedience at the first allurement, as though to sin were the legitimate business of man on

earth! But, if the experience of past ages is worth the least consideration; if the Bible in any way is a proper guide for us to follow, we ought to be ashamed at the littleness of our faith, at the proneness to sin which we display on every occasion. It is indeed unfortunate that we understand so little the teachings of the Scriptures, or that we heed them so little when we do. Not so can Israel be dignified; not so can we attain our proper rank as the favourites of Heaven, as the children of salvation. On the contrary, we ought steadily to pursue the course which our fathers followed, and be neither swayed by success on the one side to forget our accountability, nor be urged by untoward events to let go our innocency and seek for remedies in the intercourse with the world, where no safety can be found for us. When we are successful, let us look up with gratitude to Him who blesses the seasons; and when evil betides us let us resort to prayer to lay our case before God, and He will hear our cry and grant our request, if thereby our happiness can be promoted, and refuse it should our enlargement compromise the salvation of our souls.

The example of Jacob should herein teach us a lesson of wisdom and piety. He had by the intervention of Providence escaped the malevolence of his father-in-law, Laban the Aramite, when a new danger threatened him in the approach of his offended brother, with a mighty retinue, for those days, of four hundred warlike men, who followed him. Jacob did not deviate from his course to his paternal home, and seek safety in flight; because he had been told to return to the land of his birth, and that the Lord would be with him. Nor did he rely on this promise as doing

all for him, because he might justly fear that the errors and sins to which man is liable, might have exposed him or a portion of his household to punishment, through the instrumentality of Esau, subsequent to the time that the revelation concerning his homeward journey had been made known to him in his late residence. He therefore resorted to prayer as the only refuge for him, and all other afflicted ones in the day of distress, and called on the Lord to protect him in that strait in which he was, not for any merit in himself; because he averred that he was unworthy of all the mercies and the truths which had been bestowed on him; since he passed the river Jordan, in his flight from his father's house, with a simple staff for his possession, and he had now returned with two troops of cattle, in which at that time consisted the wealth of the East, together with their necessary attendants, and blessed with a hopeful progeny of twelve God-fearing children. And thus he concluded his prayer:

ואתה אמרת היטב איטיב עמך ושמתי את זרעך כחול הים אשר לא יספר מרב : בר' לב' יג':

"And Thou hast said, I will surely do good with thee, and render thy descendants like the sands of the sea which cannot be numbered for multitude." Gen. xxxii. 13.

By this he meant to aver that it was the unbought favour of God, which had so far been fulfilled in the many blessings which he had received, on which alone he relied to protect him from the threatening danger, and he invoked it that any evil, which might be impending, should through this means be averted

from reaching the mothers and the children, exposed as they were, without divine aid, to the expected wrath of the long-offended Esau; since Jacob had too much cause to suppose that, from his brother's impulsive nature, he might inflict some grievous injury on those who had not injured him, only because they were connected with himself by the ties of kindred. It is needless to recapitulate the story of the reconciliation of the brothers, as it is more simply and beautifully told than any one except the sacred historian could do in so few words; enough, the prayer of Jacob was answered, and he and his were spared to live and sanctify the Lord of hosts by their faith and their deeds.—And as was the life of Jacob, so has been our existence as a nation. Exiled from the home of our fathers, we have had to mingle with persons and nations holding beliefs differing from ours; circumstances have constantly occurred to draw us away unto the path of sin, and to forsake the Lord who had chosen us. Like Jacob, too, we have been surrounded with perils, and many a time has the persecutor's sword flashed brightly over our heads, and in its descent it was made drunken with the blood of the Lord's saints, of those who lived not for themselves, but for the happiness of mankind. And even when the storm blew loudest, when the waves rose to the most overwhelming height, was the voice of Israel heard invoking the Lord of hosts to remember the covenant and the oath, which had secured to the ancients the protection of the Supreme Arm, against which all human efforts were in vain. And though, notwithstanding our prayers, many perished, the religion which they defended perished not; and their

blood in flowing watered the tree of life, so that it bloomed the more freely, and that its shadow became more enlarged, so that many more could refresh themselves by its fruits, and be sheltered under its wide-spreading branches. And it flourishes and lives; and though new insects have sprung up to injure its growth and beauty, they will perish also, but the tree itself will live, and become again renewed after the present danger. For it is this over which the Lord watches; it is this for which He has appointed us its guardians and keepers. But let us not fail in being faithful, and we too shall each be blessed by the Lord of our labours, and He will give us a portion and a name in his sanctuary, a name of glory which shall not be cut off, and a reward of life which shall never cease. Amen.

Kislev 13th.
Decem'r 8th. } 5609.

DISCOURSE VI.

JACOB'S DEATH.

Lord of life, in whose keeping are the spirits of all creatures! we beseech Thee to be with us in all our trials, and not to forsake us in all the vicissitudes of our earthly pilgrimage. But be Thou graciously our stay, when in infancy we first feel the joys and sorrows of existence; when we hasten forward in impetuous strength of manhood, and when in decrepit old age we advance with trembling steps to the tomb,

there to lay down our mortal habiliment, whilst our soul soars upward to dwell with Thee unto eternity. Let us feel at all times that Thou art near; let us experience thy mercy when the calm sunshine lights up with beauty and splendour the placid ocean-mirror on the bosom of which our frail bark floats in security; but also then when the angry waves rise against the darkened sky, and the fierce storm roars and threatens to overwhelm the ship in which we trusted, when it invited us to venture into it in its apparent strength and security. Yes, be always at our side, and lead us safely to the goal of our existence, that we may ever have cause to know that Thou art near, that we are upheld by thy own mighty arm, that we may be protected against the machinations of evil men, and escape likewise from the power of sin; so that we may pass our life in peace, and only leave it to be received by thy glory, as were the holy ones in whom thy spirit found delight. Amen.

Brethren!

It is not the length of time which we have lived on earth which makes our life valuable, but the manner in which we have lived. Years are but days, and even eternity, as we can conceive it, is but a long continuation of days and years. If therefore all our days are spent in idle frivolity or in the pursuit of selfish gain, what have added together in our earthly pilgrimage when we are carried to our home in the earth? Suppose even that we have lived in this manner many seasons, and enjoyed all that could be enjoyed, and heaped up all that could be heaped up: what have we amassed that is real, that is abiding, that will

live beyond the grave? We will not invoke the Scriptures nor the traditions of religion to make an invective against a mere worldly life, but simply appeal to common sense to give us an answer to the highly important inquiry, which no skepticism, no brutal indifference, can stave off, "What have we gained in imperishable treasures, if we have only laboured in the pursuit of pleasure and gain?" Long may we grope in mental darkness without paying any attention to the answer which we ought to give to ourselves, if not to any one else; in the heyday of pleasure, in the hours of busy pursuits, we may not find the time nor the inclination to turn our investigation to a subject which can only give us some pain. But the awakening must come at length; health does not endure forever; success is not always the result of exertions; sunshine must give way to clouds and storms: it is then that a light will break in upon the mind, that thought and reflection will obtrude themselves upon us, however unwelcome they may be, and we must after all meet boldly the question which each one will ask of himself some time or the other in his life, "What have I done to merit salvation?" Let him then count over in his soul the banquets at which he has assisted, the dainty viands which he has consumed, the sparkling wine-cups which he has quaffed, the mazy dances which he has threaded in the embrace of beauty, the ravishing sounds which he has listened to in raptured astonishment, or the spectacles which he has beheld enacted by the masters of the scenic art: and he will discover nothing in all these to sweeten one moment of solitude, one minute of pain and sorrow. Or let him, who is on the brink of

the grave, who feels that life is ebbing fast, who knows that, barely has the breath departed from his nostrils, his expectant heirs will search for his will and testament, eager to share among themselves the wealth for which he has toiled in days of fatigue followed by sleepless nights, perhaps to dispute the disposition he has made of his means, and to fasten on his memory the odium of injustice, or to assert that he was mad when distributing his own gains among those who never toiled for them,—let him call for the account-books in which all his possessions are recorded, let him order to be spread out before his dying eyes his title-deeds to many a noble domain, and glut his expiring vision on heaped-up bags of uncounted gold, and can it be that he will find the least in all this to solace his fainting spirit, as comes in view the dark river of death which he is so soon to pass, stretching as it does far, far away into the dim regions of eternity of which he thought not, would not think, whilst he fancied that he could encompass the whole earth by his commerce, and grasp more and more of wealth and shining metals?—In the same manner the warrior, and the statesman, and the philosopher, and all others whose labours have only an earthly object, must arrive at length to the obtrusive consideration that they have toiled to no purpose, that nothing is left to them at the fatal termination of their career, when neither renown, nor power, nor fame, nor praise, nor glory, will calm their perturbed spirit, when they find themselves bankrupt in all that is enduring in a life where corruption reaches not the treasures, nor moth and worms consume the spiritual garments which envelope the righteous. This is not said because there is

no value in the good things which the world presents to our acceptance; far from it; God created all, the joys of life, the pleasures we feel in social intercourse, in the possession of wealth, of power, and of an honoured name. It would be therefore impugning the mercy of the Most Merciful to say, that we should be committing sin in tasting of the banquet which He has so liberally prepared for all mankind,—for all mankind, I say, because even to the poorest and the most abject there are moments of joy innumerable; for the smallest relief to their sufferings brings a pleasure and a glow of thankfulness, which they who always revel in superfluities cannot imagine; and to him who is racked with constant bodily ailments, the hour of relaxing disease is one of soothing comfort, though he knows that soon the enemy will return with perhaps increased force and poignancy. No, all nature offers joy to man; therefore it is no sin to be wealthy, at ease, and renowned; nor is a moderate seeking of earthly things to be deprecated; on the contrary, it is the will of Providence, as declared in his holy Word, that we should toil in order that we may eat; He promises us abundance and peace if we obey Him, and length of days to enjoy his blessings. But I speak of the absorbing passion so many have to be great on earth only; and this holds good not only of the rich, the voluptuary, and the powerful, but of those too who, not having the gifts which the elevated ones abuse, endeavour to squander away their days in those low enjoyments, in those iniquitous attempts to acquire means which debase the humble poor, and render them often an abhorrence and a byword to all beholders.

But let us view the man or the woman who has not accumulated merely to gratify a selfish passion; who has loved those whom God loves; who has walked the earth as an angel of mercy, giving aid where aid was needed; imparting wise counsel to cheer on a virtuous resolve, to remove a pernicious doubt, or to point out a judicious course of life; who has walked humbly with the Creator, seeking for guidance and instruction from the book of life which He has written for our instruction:—and what can such a one feel when the end of the world draws nigh? He may experience a shudder, it is true, at a severance from friends he holds dear; the father may weep at leaving his children dependent on a stranger's bounty; the mother may shed tears because she can no longer watch over the treasures whom a heavenly Parent has intrusted to her charge; but how will it be within the spirit of the dying righteous ones? They will to a surety experience hope and consolation,—hope for themselves that soon their God will adjudge them to life and happiness, and consolation for the fate of those dependent on their exertions and their love; because they know that He who provided for themselves from their first being until then, will also not forget those who are cast on his bounty in the persons of the helpless ones for whom the departing sufferers feel so much solicitude; but that He will sustain them, provided only they deserve his favour, as He did unto the Israelites in the desert, and as He fed Elijah at the brook of Chebar during the season of famine, and as He guided our father Jacob during his long sojourn in the service of Laban. Now to have such a hopeful state of mind there is no need

of wealth, or power, or knowledge, or the consciousness of having spent a life of pleasure; but a simple feeling of dependence on God, on his love and his bounty, and a consciousness of having discharged in all possible ways whatever of duty came in our province to execute, thereby proving that we duly appreciated our obligation to the Giver of life and our relative position to our fellow-mortals. I combine both points to complete the assurance of perfect peace; for no man has a right to say that he has completed his task by a mere exercise of philanthropy from his superabundant stores, when he parted with that which he needed not, and which perhaps he did not miss in giving it away, whilst he heeded not the demands of his religion, which counsel him to use his means only in the manner indicated in the law. In the same way, can he not lay himself down without fear of retribution, who spent his life in the observance of ceremony and devotion, and forgot that there are human beings around him who have a right to expect from him charity and fair-dealing, according to their respective relations to him. Man, on the contrary, should be what religion desires him to be, perfect with his God, perfect with God's creatures; and only then, when he has well fulfilled his obligations, can he approach the termination of his days with calm tranquillity, and look undismayed on the approach of death, which is then to him not merely the dark gulf which he must pass, the termination of which is involved in the deep mazes of eternity, but he beholds it as a fearful channel, at the brink of which the light of his God beams to his awakened vision, and he espies in the distance bright sunlit fields

and blooming gardens, filled with rich delights and inexhaustible pleasures, whilst towards him come legions of holy ones to conduct him to the Presence where all is glory, where all is peace; he feels that he steps from a state of pain into one where pain is not felt, and from a state of sorrow to one where tears are not; because the Lord God has there destroyed death to everlasting, and removed the shame of those who are truly his people through the obedient service which they have rendered Him, and He has wiped away the tears from every face, in a life where He is ever present, in an existence where He is in truth all in all to those who behold his delights and dwell forever in his palace.

It is not indeed the happiness of every good man to die with such a perfect calm, with such a complete assurance of a blissful future revealed before his opened vision. But the Bible furnishes us with several happy illustrations, and among others we have the example of Israel, who in his last moments proved himself to be at peace with God and all the world. I say not that the Bible asserts that Jacob had not sinned during any part of his existence; for this is not in consonance with history, nor can we assert it as a doctrine of religion that a life must be entirely free from sin to insure the mercy of God. No, this is not the doctrine of the Bible; it teaches, on the contrary, that man is liable to transgress through the conformation of his human constitution, being a compound of spirit and matter; but that God in his mercy will punish the righteous on earth, and then forgive the guilt atoned for through repentance and contrition. Now let us review Jacob's life as it is given

to us; let us put the greatest weight on his misdeeds as we find them recorded, and let us esteem ever so lightly his sufferings and sorrows: still the most scrupulous claimant of retributive justice must acknowledge that our ancestor amply atoned for all the wrong he ever did, by the years of agony he had to endure. Regard him as a fugitive from his father's house for a period of twenty-two years on account of the blessing he had surreptitiously obtained, it being destined for his brother; and again contemplate him enduring an awful state of suspense for another twenty-two years whilst Joseph was absent, torn away by his brothers' violence, and sold into slavery, not to enumerate the other trials which Jacob was forced to encounter: and the most patient of men would be compelled to pray that the Lord might spare him such fearful visitations, for such small transgressions as we find recorded against this eminent individual. We must on the contrary maintain that in no instance were sufferings so well calculated to elevate to a high degree the one against whom they were sent; he was in his youth perfect and upright; and the sins of later years were wiped away through the merciful dispensations which a wise Judge inflicted to purify, and to lift up the progenitor of the people with whom He, the Father of mankind, contemplated to establish an everlasting covenant. We have, therefore, these doctrines evolved from the history of Jacob: *first*, that no man is secured against the approach of sin; *secondly*, that a man is not absolutely rejected because he has transgressed; *thirdly*, that he can repent and become reconciled to God; *fourthly*, that it is the will of Heaven that all sins shall be atoned for in the person of the

transgressor through commensurate punishment; and *fifthly*, that punishments thus viewed are not an evidence of rejection from the grace and mercy of the Most High. We must pass over the practical application of these doctrines, as they embrace a subject of inquiry of sufficient importance to be taken by itself alone; but this much we may assert at once, that they are in perfect accordance with our ideas of salvation through the mercy and grace of the Creator alone, without the intervention of a mediator or secondary power to screen us against impending wrath, and that any doctrine militating against this view is both opposed to reason and Scripture.

So behold, then, our father Israel stretched on the bed from which he was assured he should never rise again in this life; and what do you see? Does he lament and mourn that his death approaches? does he repine over the hardships he had been compelled to endure, though he had frequent communications from God, such as no other man had received before him? or do you find him recounting his own good deeds, and boasting of what he had done as a man of religion or philanthropy? Nothing of all this, he is tranquil, he is resigned, he awaits the coming dissolution, whilst he prepares himself to give his last charge to his children, the future fathers of the God-chosen people, who are again all united, and all standing around the couch of suffering of their glorious progenitor. You must understand well that Jacob's knowledge was not that of an ordinary man; he was permitted to look far into the arcana of coming events, and that which is to happen to his latest descendants was made clear to his ken. It was then in this temper

of mind that he spoke his last words, some of which are not perhaps as clear to us as the accomplishment of them will render them at last; they are merely short and sententious, couched in the most elevated and figurative language of poetry, doubtless taking their peculiar form from customs and ideas prevailing at that time, the knowledge of which has not come down to us, or those even from whom we have received our immediate instruction. But this much we do know, that he clearly indicated the peculiar relative position of the brothers in their future connexion with each other, and in their possessions which they respectively acquired in the land of promise. This history proves beyond contradiction, and it shows us therefore that, in his last moments, Jacob's mind still retained the inspiration of God and the certainty of the truth, which so long accompanied him during his weary pilgrimage, the days of his sojourning as he called them in his interview with Pharaoh. Whatever, therefore, he said must be viewed not as a matter of speculation but of certainty, if we are only acquainted with the import of the words employed, and we are therefore authorized to base on the blessings of Jacob doctrines which are to be our guide for life. It would take a wide range to go over the whole of them; we must therefore be satisfied for the present with the illustrations of a single phrase, connected as it is with the subject with which we commenced this day. I refer to the apparently isolated exclamation with which concludes the blessing addressed to Dan, and which consists of but three words in the original, namely:

לישועתך קויתי ה׳ : בר׳ מט׳ יח׳ :

"For thy salvation do I hope, O Lord!" Genesis xlix. 18.

As it is quite unconnected with the preceding verses, we may assume that it is either a general blessing addressed to all the sons, or perhaps that it was an exclamation of Israel, forced from him at the moment of acute suffering preceding so immediately his dissolution. Still, whatever be the meaning of the phrase in the relative position which it had to the dying patriarch, its value is not diminished in a doctrinal point of view; for it embraces the assertion that all salvation proceeds from the one Source, from the only one God, whom Jacob had learned to worship in the multitude of prophetic visions which had been vouchsafed to him. Whether, therefore, it is addressed to one or all the fathers of the tribes, or whether it is a brief prayer spoken by Israel for his own behalf, it teaches us that, whether in life or in death, there is but one means of salvation, but one point to which our eyes should be directed. Faith in the power of God, a trust in his salvation was the last thought of the man Israel, he who had next to Moses and Abraham been the familiar in God's house; and as he departed, so let us depart this life. Was it only necessary for him to place his trust on the mercy which is flowing from the perennial Fountain, without invoking sacrifice or mediation: so must it be sufficient for us to lean on the same mighty God for support, in order to carry us through the gates of death, to look for his salvation in the future life whither we are journeying. I know well enough that Israelites are faithful, that they are sincere believers in the only

true God; nevertheless it is well to impress on their minds that our doctrines are those taught by the holy Scriptures, that we have not permitted fallible men to fasten on us views of their own not countenanced by the evident word of God. Besides, it is often our duty to give to others, differing from us, satisfactory reasons for our faith; it is therefore proper that we should hold up to those who have yet to learn what we have received as a legacy from Heaven, and to impress on their minds a few strong arguments, if nothing more, which may stand them in good stead to ward off specious appeals which are constantly addressed to them by strangers to shake their constancy. If, then, you are asked to join in the manner of those who lean on a broken reed for support, who invoke the aid of one whom they imagine capable of pleading for them before the great Father: tell them that you tread in the footsteps of those blessed lights of the earth who shone in imperishable brightness long before the founder of their errors was born, ages before their corrupt views of religion were in existence; and as these saints prayed, so will you pray; as they believed, so will you believe; as they lived, so will you live; and as they died, so will you die. It may appear bold in a sinful mortal, even after having made his peace with man, and atoned, as far as he can, for the sins which he committed against the Supreme, to appeal directly to God for forgiveness, for mercy, and to receive his spirit in favour. But it is not human reason which has taught us to do so; for, on the contrary, it is the word of the living God itself which impresses us by precept and example to speak directly to Him in the hour of our need; to lay open

to Him our wounded heart, to confide into his hand our broken spirit, "because," as the Psalmist expresses himself, "He the God of truth will redeem us." So also spoke Jacob in the text we have chosen: "In thy salvation do I hope, O Lord!" It is this entire confidence in God, his word, his truth, which should distinguish the Israelite above all other men; it should prove that he has been worthily trained for heaven; that he has truly confided in the doctrines which have been impressed on his mind from early infancy till mature old age. And if this be so, then can he look undismayed on the future, even as did Jacob, and see his end approach; then can he command his children, as did the patriarch, and exhort them to walk in the way of the Lord; and then can he gather his feet into his bed and expire calmly, in the assurance of an awakening in a better life under the shadow of the wings of the Almighty, protected against evil, and secure in peace and happiness. And such a death is worth a life of virtue and resignation to God's decrees; it is the crowning triumph of those who have done the will of their Maker; and let it then come to them in their early years, or when they are full of days and honour, it matters not; for their earthly life has been long enough to earn for them salvation and a blissful recompense; and the good they hoped for will be theirs, and their memorial will be accepted, and their name will be a blessing, even as was that of the ancient servant of God after whom the sons of Israel are called. And let us hope that such may be our own lot; that we may live in harmony with God, and in concord with his creatures; and that when the hour of our death has passed,

mankind may say of each of us, "Better was this one's day of death than that of his birth;" and may we be adjudged to everlasting life. Amen.

Tebeth 11th. } 5609.
Jan'y 5th. }

DISCOURSE VII.

THE STRENGTH OF OUR RELIGION.

O LORD! who hadst compassion on our fathers, and didst lead them forth with almighty power and an outstretched arm to purchase them unto Thee for a people of thy inheritance, as it is this day, deign to regard us also with thy visitation of mercy and grace, and let our memorial ascend before Thee for our good and our happiness. Look on our fallen state, that we have sunk from the high position of thy favourites, and become a people despised and lowly, as though we were cast off from thy mercy. Yet are we the same descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel thy servants, as were those who received thy law when coming out of Egypt, and we are still thy witnesses, testifying of thy glory and thy unity, and still ready to follow Thee whithersoever thy providence may direct our steps. O Father! hear us in our dispersion, and let thy light truly and safely guide us; let thy wisdom inspire our mind, let thy word be fixed in our heart, and let our mouth overflow with thy praise. Let us entreat Thee also to build up the breaches of Zion, and to restore her desolations as aforetime; when we will let incense ascend on thy altars, and lead sacri-

fices again to the residence of thy majesty. Nations then shall drink of the stream which quickens us; people shall imbibe the wisdom which now strengthens our spirit; and thine, O God! shall be the kingdom, and the names of idols shall be abolished from the earth, and truth shall overspread every land, and all shall feel and acknowledge that Thou, O God of Israel! hast created all flesh, hast called forth every spirit, hast given life to all that lives, and art alone in power and glory, uncreated, unequalled, sovereign God, Lord everlasting, Saviour omnipotent, the Father eternal, from the beginning till time shall be no more. Amen.

Brethren!

It is now twenty-four years ago since this structure was opened, after being rebuilt from the foundation, and dedicated anew to the worship of the God of Jacob. The hymn then pealed for the first time in this house, and the unity of God was proclaimed as the watchword of the congregation assembled within these walls, and they declared themselves thereby to be members and confederates of the family of Israel. Of the many who then filled the seats a large proportion have silently sunk into the grave, and their voice is heard no more in our assembly. But the same spirit which induced them to labour in erecting this house, which filled them with joy when they saw it completed, still dwells among us, and we are here to declare again on this anniversary, as on previous similar occasions, that we are of the same brotherhood of faith and hope, as were those who erected this house and left it as a legacy to their successors. Mighty

changes have since then passed over the earth; empires have been overthrown; new opinions in religion and politics have made themselves deeply felt; thrones supposed to be immovably fixed have been moved and hurled to the ground; science has achieved new triumphs in the field of discovery and improvement; and all this within the memory of comparatively young men; and nevertheless with us the change has been light, and has not cast the decay of age over our religion, and we follow the path which our fathers followed, and are again here to call on the name of the Most High, and to speak of his deeds which He wrought in Egypt, and of the signs which He displayed among them, and we still emphatically feel that He is in truth the Lord Eternal, to whom alone we are to direct our prayers, whose law alone we are to consult as our rule of life. It is indeed but a short time, comparatively speaking, since the consecration of this synagogue; many of you well recollect the day and the hour when first they heard here the deep notes of devotion from the man they had chosen as their messenger to the Hearer of prayer; they yet recollect the beautiful anthems which re-echoed joyfully from many a tongue joining in praise to the Father of his people: yet in the age of the world it has been a period of unusual activity, and events have crowded each other as they rarely do even in the most turbulent times, and infant ideas have since acquired a giant form, and have filled the earth with their fame. Everything has been anew subjected to a searching inquiry, and what had been defended before and been considered beyond dispute, has again been dragged forward from its repose, and

probed to its very foundation. The events of the day, however, are the mere exponents of the secret influences which have been at work; and though many may be astonished when viewing the terrible revolutions lately witnessed as isolated facts, the calm inquirer and he who has watched the gradual development of the latent mighty thought of popular power, will find nothing very remarkable in the event which was clearly stepping hourly more and more forward, produced as it was by the effervescence of mind which had long since commenced, and to arrest which nothing was capable which was at all within the power of the civil and religious government of the earth. Judaism has been assailed likewise amidst all this din and clamour; many predicted that the development of new thoughts would prove fatal to its isolation and to the hold it hitherto had on the mind of its followers; many also have united their exertions to produce a mighty effort to withdraw our members from a union with us, and to offer them all sorts of inducements to surrender their adherence to our faith; many, farther, have arisen among ourselves to diffuse strange notions, and to establish views not formerly received among us, and have alleged that new measures must be supported to save a wreck of Jewish principles, and to maintain a remnant of Israel's descendants. But, though so much has been effected, as I have said already, in the demolition of ancient things among other sects, and even the removal of what had been established with so much labour, and blood, and treasure, and wisdom in modern times, Judaism has thus far stood the test of revolution, assault, and faintheartedness, with admirable strength

and power of resistance, and the enemies without and within have to this day, for which the Lord be thanked, exhausted their labour in vain; and though it is no doubt that many have already swerved, and that others yet will undoubtedly follow the same evil example, there need be no fear of an impending destruction of our people. Those who only look at the surface may fancy that they see symptoms of decay; because they aver that the changes from oppression to liberty will induce many to yield quietly that religion, which they convulsively clasped to their bosom in times when mankind endeavoured to deprive them of it by force; that the more enlarged intercourse with the world will cause a gradual fusion of our nationality amidst the people where we reside, by our taking in marriage those differing from us in ancestry and belief, by which means our descendants will be mingled up with others and be no longer distinguishable; that the progress of ideas will sweep away the mutual prejudices entertained by Jews and gentiles, and that the former will then insensibly drop their peculiarities when the line of separation is reduced to an almost inappreciable thread. These may be the opinions of indifferent investigators, when looking with surprise at the magnificent panorama of mighty events which are developing themselves daily before their eyes; but if so, they have not well understood the peculiarity of the Jews, nor the characteristics of the gentile world. Great as are modern events, they are not altogether unprecedented; there have been before this times of quiet and enlargement for our people, although they lasted but a brief space; and we have yet to learn that the ease of the present will

endure much longer. But even if it should, that does not say that the Jew will for this reason not value his characteristic mission any farther, and yield his religion to the common demand for equality and fraternity, as though this sacrifice were necessary in the new acquisition of liberty. People forget, perhaps, that religion has no part to play in the mighty and terrible dramas which have of late* been enacted; at least it has no business to interfere actively and visibly in public affairs. Modern nations have so long constituted the profession of certain religious dogmas the arbitrary standard of political power, and have made all sorts of privileges dependent on the profession of opinions sanctioned by the state, that they cannot yet see that, when they emancipate themselves from this odious tyranny, the sufferers from the long ages of exclusion have nothing to yield when invited to partake now of human rights. If it be necessary for us to reject any part of our religious views, not to mention the totality of our faith, to be entitled to political equality in all things: what, I ask, have we gained by the change over which we rejoice? Tyrants of ancient days, from Nebuchadnezzar down, asked of us only that we should fall prostrate and worship the idol which they had erected; it was only what they called doing a harmless thing which they required; we should only become like them, and then we might have life, wealth, power, pleasure, or whatever we might desire, even the privilege of persecuting our former brothers of Israel. And now shall it be required of us to surrender, for instance, our confident

* Referring to the revolutions of 1830 and 1848.

hope in the coming of the son of David, because this belief militates against the idea of a perfection in human wisdom,—against the assumption that mere human reason can establish the kingdom of peace, and secure in the best manner the sum total of human happiness? If this be so, then there is no perceptible difference between the tyranny of kings and democracies, or between the intolerance of inquisitors and philosophical dreamers. If our religion must be destroyed, it cannot make the least difference to the Jew who rules, and what opinions obtain the supremacy; and for that matter, we might prefer one tyrant at a time to the legions of opponents under the present system; for we might ascertain the opinions required of us if a few or one would be able to dictate, but it is impossible so to frame our ideas as to satisfy the vast masses which now rule. But it is freedom which is professed for all; and we too enter into the new state of things, not because we are Jews, but because we are men; and because, while we have no right to question any human being concerning his religion or politics, and while we do not ask of him to modify his opinions to please us, we cannot permit any one to concern himself with what we believe or do in a religious relation, which we have not and cannot surrender to the popular supervision, it being the sacred right of conscience, over which we alone have to watch, and the regulation of which must be left to the law and the customs of Israel, as expounded to us by our religious teachers.

Now, it is possible enough, nay, it is well known to be so, that many will prove their worthiness of political liberty by making all sorts of concessions,

and by explaining away all the features of our belief which appear perhaps somewhat harsh to non-Israelites. But this is likewise certain, that it will be chiefly in the first commencement of our new participation in political privileges; but that, when the thing has become somewhat old by habitual use, the rightly-thinking portion of Jews will revert to the instruction of Scripture, and profess anew what is taught there, to the exclusion of all new philosophical speculations. It is also true that prosperity is a severe trial to our people. Persecutions they can face with indomitable courage; they are a brave race, and for endurance and persistency they are unequalled among mankind. In Egypt, in Babylon, in Persia, and in Rome, they remained distinguishable and united among the heathens; and when the Nazarenes and Mahomedans arose successively with new and modified doctrines, some few in comparison to their numbers were seduced away from their allegiance, but the vast majority either perished nobly upholding their faith, or lived through poverty, contumely, abhorrence, and disgrace, and worshipped their God in humility and the want of every earthly comfort. And when, from time to time, the hand of persecution relaxed its tortures, and when Jews were found the companions of the kings and the nobles, the trusted servants of the crown, or the confidential physicians of pontiffs and priests, they, for this sake, did not, as a class, prove false to their opinions. Again, I say, that some could not bear this prosperity, as others succumbed before and since to the terrors which surrounded them; but they have proved the exceptions, and hence their example need not influence us with the fear for the

future, which some enemies of Israel would uselessly inspire us with.

But let me call your attention, brethren, to one remarkable circumstance, and this is the inveterate hatred which has been always felt for the religion of Israel from the earliest history of our people. It was the same in Pharaoh who knew not the Lord, the same in Balak, king of Moäb, who misled Israel to sin, the same in the bloody tribunals of the middle ages, and again the same in the societies for the seduction of the Jews from their faith, of which we have heard so much of late years. Pharaoh, Balak, the Inquisition, did, in a measure, succeed in their various ways to work mischief to us, and many of us fell at the different epochs in which the above flourished in their schemes of wickedness. Should, therefore, our enemies of the present age meet with some little success, and obtain occasionally a lukewarm sinner or a hireling renegade to join himself to them: we may be assured, nevertheless, of one thing, that we have lost no strength by this severance from us of an unworthy member; he has gone to those who will overwhelm him with kindness and embraces, whilst we are rid of a traitor, one false to God, false to his brothers, and false to himself. Admit, even, that his conversion should be sincere, so much so as to be above suspicion: then we have lost one who could not defend his ancestral religion, who had no heart for the law of Moses, who understood not the glorious principle of the Unity of God, that glorious principle which will ultimately prevail from one end of the world to the other, as it is solely the true mystery of the creation; since from the highest planet,

the most distant constellation, down to the minutest dust which flits in the sunlight, there is discoverable one uniform gradation, a single and uniform design. Now it is the repugnance of many to the principle of the Unity, as professed by us, which is the key to all the efforts made for our extermination, and to the hope constantly expressed that at last the means have been discovered of effecting it. So whilst there are, I am glad to acknowledge, thousands on thousands who wish to make us free on principles of humanity and justice, there are, perhaps, as many others who acquiesce in the movement solely from an inimical feeling to Judaism. They have seen from history and experience, that persecution and exclusion only riveted the closer the bonds which unite us to God: so they then deem it a duty to try the opposite extreme, and to see whether or not a perfect equalization of Jews and gentiles will not induce us to forego our identity, and become like them. It is with us as it was with Samson. We, like him, are asked: "In what does your great strength consist?" But it is not, like him, an outward token, but the inward spirit which constitutes us Jews; yet like Samson's personal prowess, it depends upon the will of God, and on the condition that we follow the orders which we have received. We must not, therefore, fall asleep on the lap of a false Delilah, of a gentile invitation to yield ourselves captives to the charms of the world, as though a new era had commenced, and vigilance were no longer requisite. For if we do so, we shall be left, for a season, to the tender mercy of our new confederates, and the spirit of God will depart from us, and only after violent sufferings will it revisit us,

perhaps to be kindled again into life at the very moment only when we are compelled to bid farewell to the earth and its enjoyments.—This is told you, that you may not be disheartened at occasionally hearing of a defection from our ranks. It is deplorable, deeply to be regretted, that an Israelite, the humblest of his tribe, should be false to his faith; but we should regard any apostacy arising from the present state of freedom, even if perpetrated by the greatest and most influential, as nothing fatal or particularly remarkable; since, at all times, there have been sinners and transgressors, and for all that the lamp of Israel has not been quenched.

The Scriptures, brethren, are a true record of the past and the future. Other writings may give a faithful narrative of the occurrences which *have* taken place; we will assume that human information may be able to grapple with facts, though even this is somewhat doubtful, to judge from the ill success which historical investigations have so often met with. But the recesses of the future are absolutely locked up, and inaccessible to human ken. Not so to the eye of God; for this pervades all which will be, and there is no uncertainty to shroud from Him the events which are coming. Nay, they have come already, so soon as He announces them; because there can exist no conformation of events and circumstances to preclude their coming to pass in reality, just as his knowledge has foreseen them. If, therefore, the Scriptures speak of the eternal duration of a precept, we need feel no alarm about its ever ceasing to be respected. Eternal it must be, because it is so stated; abrogated it cannot be, unless it be

limited by some other circumstance announced and conditioned by the same authority. Now, it appears from inspection, that Judaism, in its peculiar precepts, has received the stamp of eternity from the Author of our being, and hence it is proved indestructible in the wisdom of Providence. You have been told before, but it cannot be too often repeated, that the phraseology of the Bible is not one of accident but of design. Its omissions are of importance as much as what it contains; and its precepts are of that character that they have to be so understood as the words in which they are given convey them to us, not as arbitrary reasoning would perhaps wish to make them. If, then, it is said in the Bible that we shall do so, but not otherwise, we must implicitly follow the commandment, and not reason it away by any fancy of our own, however ingenious it may be. Nor must we be deterred by the assertion of others, that it is not necessary for us so to act, as to place a bar of separation between us and the world; since the law, in obedience to which we allege to act, could not have meant it so particularly as we deem it to be. But this much we may safely allege, that as the law is both imperative and prophetic, both relating to conduct and indicating futurity, it teaches this important principle, that its precepts are infallible and not to be repealed, and that, at the same time, they will be always obeyed by the true descendants of Israel, which term comprises all those who will remain faithful to the religion of their fathers during all the changes and vicissitudes which have been, and are, impending over us. With this preface let us briefly elucidate verse 24 of Exodus xii.:

ושמרתם את הדבר הזה לחק לך ולבניך עד עולם:
שמות יב' כר':

"And you shall observe this thing, as a statute unto thee and unto thy children forever."

When was this announcement, which, as said, partakes of the nature of prophecy and precept, made? The reading of the context will answer you, At the time that the Israelites were still in Egypt, but expected to be permitted to quit the land of their bondage through the threatened slaughter of the first-born. Freedom was not yet theirs, it was only in anticipation. The task-masters were subdued to some extent by the terrible plagues which had been inflicted on them. They were, nevertheless, still powerful to hold in bondage their slaves who had served them well for nearly two hundred years; and had the deliverance not taken place, as promised, it would have been utterly impossible for the Israelites to have observed the Passover, of which institution the precept in question speaks, neither then nor to perpetuity, as is here enjoined. But what was the result at the time? The deliverance did take place at the precise hour and in the manner indicated; and ever since the Passover has been observed, both as a national mark of thanksgiving to our great Deliverer, and as a token that we accept Him as our Sovereign and God, and acknowledge no one besides Him as having power in heaven and on earth. Our encounters with adversity of all kinds have been fearful enough to try the strength of our attachment to our Father; and notwithstanding our frequent backslidings, we have not altogether forsaken Him, nor have we denied our fealty to Him

to adopt a stranger god. And when a man, from our own midst, arose, and proclaimed himself, or was by his followers acknowledged a part of the godhead, and when mighty nations, unknown when we went out of Egypt, adopted the new system thus introduced on earth, and threatened us with all the terrors which fiendish malice could devise; and when a bloody conqueror arose in the plains of Arabia, and announced himself as a prophet of a new message in the name of the Most High, and waged fierce warfare against those who refused to acknowledge him and his mission; and when other inventions of men were offered to us, to forego our testimony to the truth of God's Unity: we stood firm, if not unshaken; and every spring-season, in its annual return, saw us celebrating the Lord's Passover, even as we were commanded. And what mattered it to us how few there were left who could thus glorify the Lord? Each man felt himself the representative of the Patriarchs, and each woman knew that she bore in herself a lineal descent from the mothers of Israel, those noble matrons who stood side by side with their glorious spouses to proclaim the power of the Creator in periods when darkness overspread the earth, and when the light of truth flickered at times like an expiring lamp, being fed only by the efforts of a single family. This has been our course for a very long period; and the faith which was so firmly rooted, so beautifully upheld, has not been left unfruitful in its effects, and at this day the followers of the God of Jacob are more numerous than they have been probably since the destruction of the temple. They have increased even in the same measure as men attempted their

destruction; and they have survived the perils which all thought would make an end of them. And thus have we been brought to the present period in our history; for though yet persecuted in many countries, we have obtained freedom in many others, and the secular sciences are open for our competition with other men. The period of transition is already nearly past; and though severe blows have been struck by the ungodly against our union, and though some have endeavoured to produce sectarian divisions among us, still we may freely say that no success has attended these unholy efforts. The newness of freedom may, perhaps, have inspired some of these movements; but we are daily getting more used to it; and before long we shall look round, examine our position, and fall back upon the word of God alone as our standard, and reply to all opponents, in the language of Scripture, that our law, with all its peculiarities, was given to us and our descendants forever. The time of its duration is indefinite; and as no probable period has been fixed, we cannot listen to any appeals which counsel us to adopt any system which dispenses us of the observation of the precepts. Only be ye all of good courage and unwavering in your love for the law of God; be not dismayed at the backsliding of your neighbours or of your own household, should this unfortunately be the case; but adhere firmly, as though on you depended the salvation of Israel, and the permanence of the religion of Sinai. If thus you do, the blandishments of peace, or the storms of war, will pass by you without injuring the word of God which is in your mouth; and you can look with scorn upon the silly efforts made to

withdraw you from your allegiance; and each recurring year will see you devoted to God, true to the faith which He established on earth; and in early youth, and in extreme age, in times of rest and of persecution, should they dawn again, will He be with you and bless you, even as you desire, until the end of days. Amen.

Shebat 3d. } 5609
Jan'y 26th. }

DISCOURSE VIII.

STRICT OBEDIENCE.

No. II.

FATHER of Israel, whose glory is extended over thy people! let us experience thy bounty and mercy, and deal with us in loving-kindness, when Thou comest to search out our deeds which are wrought in the light of open day, or in the secrecy of darkness. What can we say unto Thee? what allege in our defence? knowest Thou not the motives which prompt our acts? can we hide from Thee the selfishness and ambition which urge us on? Yea, we are unclean in heart, in secret, as we are defiled in hands publicly, and the majority of our deeds are as nothing before Thee, for all is vanity. But still Thou willest to be served by man, and acceptest his acts as an agreeable savour before Thee, and what is left incomplete in his sinfulness Thou accomplishest through thy goodness, which is the light of the world and the origin of all

things; and it is thy spirit which acts like the waters of purification, to remove away the uncleanness of iniquity, and to restore the brightness of original purity. O hear us, then, Fountain of truth and light! hear us in our sinful state! reject us not in our unworthiness, and cast us not off though defiled by transgression. Accept our will, which we devote to Thee; and if our deeds of mercy be few whilst our sins cry out for vengeance: then do Thou fulfil what Thou hast said through thy messenger, that, as the father hath compassion on his sons, so hath the Lord mercy on those that fear Him. Yea, show us the light of thy countenance, and let us experience that Thou art indeed He who redeemest Israel from transgression, and rememberest not their sins for the sake of thy truth and thy mercy, and for the sake of thy holy Name which is the hope of the world and the sole stay of thy people, thy servants whom Thou chosest from all nations to proclaim thy glory to all mankind. Amen.

Brethren!

We occasionally hear the strict Jew upbraided with being a formalist, by which they who use the word as a term of reproach mean to convey, that he attaches weight only to outward acts of devotion without thereby becoming at all tinctured with humanity or feelings of mercy and benevolence; and they therefore place far above him in the scale of merit the one who has what they call the spirit of religion, which, if it mean anything in contradistinction to form, conveys the idea that acts of religion proper are of no importance, so only a person has religious convictions, and

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does not molest his neighbour, and exercises at convenience some decent acts of benevolence? It is indeed a fashion among certain classes of men to attach a great weight to their sentiments; they aver that outward tokens, resulting in deeds of piety, are not of any significance, so only the heart is all right; and then they also allege that they can compensate for any deficiencies in actions by being charitable and kind, and exercising neighbourly love on all occasions. But let us see what all this amounts to. Is religion founded in truth? All answer, "Yes, we do not dispute that." What does it teach? "Duties," all will say, "as well as belief." Again, what sort of duties are by it enforced? "Social and religious duties." So far all agree: religion is true, it teaches us duties and belief, and enforces in regard to the former social acts and those properly originating in revelation solely.—But if the man who believes *form* to be necessary, since it emanates from God, or else it would not have been ordained, insists on the equality of duties with spiritual feelings and moral acts in the eyes of Heaven, he is met with the objection, "Will you place the observance of the Sabbath on a par with the feeding of the hungry and clothing of the naked? will you, in abstaining from forbidden food, think you have served your Maker as effectually as in restoring a lost treasure to its owner?" And should our formalist answer in the affirmative that he so believes, and that he thereby acts in the spirit of religion as well as in the letter, the defenders of mere inward religion will turn away from him in horror, and exclaim, "See how blindly he clings to forms; behold how little of the spirit of religion there is in him!"—But I tell you

candidly that the formalist is in the right, the spiritualist totally in the wrong. The Bible knows nothing of a distinction between spirit and form, it only knows of duties of deeds and duties of faith, the first of which comprise outward acts, whether consisting in commission or abstaining, and the others enforce an acquiescence in the fundamental principles of belief which are contained in the records of revelation. Therefore, whatever is taught in the Bible is, if a deed, important, if a point of belief, a religious truth; and the true believer has, therefore, no choice but to conform to the one and to adopt the other, if he be desirous of complying with the demands of Scripture.

No one will say that a man of form acts justly if he defrauds his neighbour of his lawful property; if he slanders the absent; if he gives bad advice; or if he hardens his heart against the appeals of the distressed; for does not the Bible command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself? Thou shalt not steal? Before the blind thou shalt not lay a stumbling-block? Thou shalt not close thy hand against thy brother, the needy one?" Speak of humanity, what is there, I ask of you, and am willing to be contradicted, what is there in all the range of morals which is *not* comprised in the law of Moses? Who then can say that the whole system of social duties does not belong to the *forms* of our religion?—Only see, brethren, and I must impress it on your mind as a not-to-be-forgotten lesson, the Decalogue, that is to say the Ten Commandments, the עשרת הדברים, which not alone were written on the two tables of stone, but also serve as the foundation of the highest civilization,—the Decalogue is composed of a twofold character of precepts, the first and

the principal, as upon them the others are based, refer to the worship of God; but the others, and these embrace the majority of precepts, refer to social demands, both of command and prohibition. The very constitution, therefore, of our law embraces belief and duty, and the last is referable both to religion and humanity proper. The Legislator, the God of Israel, made no distinction; He taught the whole in the presence of the nation whom He had chosen as his servants. What authorizes us then to distinguish, to separate, and to place one part above the other? The whole clearly and truly belongs to the form of Judaism, which is nothing else than the collection of the commandments which the Lord imparted to the patriarchs, to Moses and to the Israelites, as also the doctrines which are laid down in the revelation of the divine Mind communicated at various periods to the prophets both of the gentiles and of the Hebrews. In short, the whole Bible is the doctrine of Israel; there is no article of belief which can be rejected, and no matter of duty which we are authorized to set aside. Everything which we are taught to believe is a portion of our creed; whatever we are commanded to do belongs to the outward form of religion. Honesty, humility, truth, and rectitude are therefore as much the proper characteristic of the Jew as circumcision, the observance of the Sabbath, the abstaining from forbidden meats, and the celebration of the Passover; nor are all these together any more his duty than is the imbuing of his soul with a thorough acquiescence in the existence of God, in a sincere acceptance of the Bible as a truth in the aggregate and detail, and with an entire submission to the de-

crees of God, so that on all occasions he may acknowledge in Him only a Benefactor and a just Judge, let the event which befalls him be what it may.

Here, believing brothers and sisters in Israel! have you an outline of what is required of you, an embodiment of the form and substance of your faith, and I am sure that you need not hide the smallest, minutest portion thereof from public gaze; because it is all reasonable, and what is more, it has been proved true by reflection of the brightest minds, and the experience of ages. Fine-spun theories, beautiful sentiments, may emanate from the well-springs of those bright intellects whom the Father of all calls forward from time to time to illuminate the darkness around them, though they are not prophets on that account. There was Socrates among the Greeks, so likewise were Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle; there was Cadmus among the Phœnicians, who is reputed to have carried the alphabet to Hellas; there was Cicero and Seneca among the Romans, and doubtless many others who were permitted to benefit their fellow-men by the brilliancy of the light which burnt in their souls. But they only lived for the learned, for those who were able to devote time and patience to the elucidation of the hidden treasures which the works of their predecessors on the road to science and discovery had treasured up. For all practical purposes, therefore, they had no permanent effect on the lives of mankind; and though their theories live to this day, and have enjoyed the honour of being commented upon and carefully studied by minds nowise inferior to their own, and whom they only excelled because they lived before them: still they never imbued na-

tions with their ideas, admitting even that they themselves originated them, and that they did not obtain them from the same source from which we derive our religion, that is to say, the revelation on Horeb. But this manifestation of the Godhead in broad day, before an assembled nation, in the presence of men from various people besides Israel, was and is something entirely different from a mere philosophical discovery; something far superior to the evolvement of a metaphysical principle in respect to the nature of God; something immeasurably beyond an inquiry into the establishment of a wise government for a commonwealth of free intelligent men; it was and is the development of a sure morality, a safe system of government, a training of the intellect on sure principles of ethics, based upon the declaration of God himself with regard to his existence, nature, and powers. The God of Israel, as He was graciously pleased to call himself, because He had chosen our progenitor Israel as the father of a nation in covenant with Him, declared that He exists, first as One and alone, without associate, rival, or other controlling influence; secondly as the Eternal, whose being is not limited by time and duration; thirdly as omnipresent, whose presence pervades all space; and fourthly, as the Almighty Creator, from whom all that is has emanated, and who rules over all that exists by his sole will and power. There was left no room to doubt as to this doctrine, because He interdicted the adoration of any beings in the whole range of nature beside himself, because they do not exist with any independent power to aid, to benefit, or to injure man without his concurrence; and as the announcement was for all times,

there could therefore be imagined no time when any other worship save that of the Lord Almighty could become possible, either by the assent of religion or the requirement of reason.

Now it was on this basis of permanent adoration of the true God and Creator, that in revealing himself He founded a moral and civil government of the people whom He had chosen. It was not, therefore, a temporary legislation, one liable to be repealed or rendered nugatory by subsequent circumstances; but a permanent codification, as we may call it, which God contemplated, and in order to make it readily accessible, He comprised it in a few brief sentences, which a child can readily learn by heart; and to effect that it shall never be forgotten as the rule of our nation, He connected it with living outward ceremonies of constant recurrence, so that with each observance of the same, the principles on which they are founded shall be called to mind, and that thereby the Author of the law may be strongly brought before the intellect, the soul, the heart, or by whatever term we denominate the source of our feelings and sensations, as the only true God, besides whom there is no Creator, Preserver, and Saviour. The form, therefore, is a vital part of the religion; it is the distinguishing feature which characterizes it from all other merely speculative investigations in the nature, substance and being of the Divine Power. That which cost uninstructed reason centuries to approach merely at a distance, became to us evident in a moment through revelation; and whereas systems of philosophy, after all the labour bestowed on them, never did become the principle for regulating the conduct of man: the

Bible at once rose to the importance of a guide in all things relating to the domestic and private life of Israelites and the code of their state. And the means employed to effect this was the ceremonial law, the form, as modern scoffers would perhaps call it, the outward shell, as others designate the same, which incloses the pure kernel of the truth of the Divine Existence. Now, no one will say that the knowledge of our God is not the greatest benefit which we have received through the law; but to maintain that the ceremonies are therefore of no importance, is clearly to contradict the whole scheme of revelation. For the ceremonies were given to impress us, as I have said already, at each performance thereof, that they owed their origin to something in our relations to God, and that we were ordered to do so because we were and are Israelites, and because He was and is God. For instance, with respect to the Sabbath, it is said, "And the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to make the Sabbath throughout their generations as an everlasting covenant. Between me and the children of Israel it is a sign forever, that in six days the Lord made the heaven and the earth, and on the seventh He rested and was refreshed." What is here stated to be the day of rest? The seventh day, commanded previously in the Ten Commandments. What is it to be? A covenant, or an agreement between Israelites on their part and their God on the other; they promise by its observance to be true and faithful subjects to their most holy King, and He promises to bless and protect them, and let his Spirit dwell with them. To the Israelites then it becomes a sign, an evidence that they

believe, first, in the creation of the world; that they do not look upon it, as materialists do, as composed of the original matters which always existed, and assumed shape and form by a fortuitous succession of circumstances, but that it is a product of a supreme, intelligent, benevolent Power, whose nature is unsearchable, and whom no human means or intelligence can pretend to reach. Secondly, they profess that the Creator of the world is also the Author of the Sabbath; wherefore they are willing to abstain from lawful pursuits on the day which He has consecrated, because they believe that He has the right to ask this of those who live by his will, and are sustained by his bounty. The Sabbath, therefore, is of great significance; it is holy, because the Lord so declares it, and in observing it we offer weekly the homage of our belief and trusting faith to the Creator of the world.

Let me digress here a little. You see that the weekly day of rest is a sign, a token of a covenant, for which reason alone it is ordained. It is a form, it is true, and may, for all we know, have no influence on the life of him who observes it. But would you for this excuse disregard it? or postpone it to some act of humanity? to the giving of alms, or speaking comfort to a sufferer? Great and good as such acts are, little though they cost the performer thereof, they are not superior, even if we take reason for our guide, to humbling ourselves before the Lord, and declaring that He is our Master and our Benefactor, and that we exist by his will solely, and are accountable to none but Him. The form, therefore, is a substantive part of religion, and no one can say that he

has the spirit of true faith within him, if he refuses through carelessness or design to make that sacrifice of his worldly interests, which the Sabbatic rest demands of him.

Now the Sabbath has thus a meaning; it is a bond of love between God and the world. But why? because God ordained it, and not otherwise; He instituted it an emblem of his abstaining from the creative work at the beginning of things, when He had finished all the objects which He desired to call forth, which idea is embraced in the word וינפש, commonly translated refreshed, but which is derived from the noun נפש, originally soul, but also used for "will" and "pleasure," wherefore we might have rendered it, "And He had attained his pleasure and purpose." Were it not then for this reason, we should not be required to rest. But even the Lord, if we may say so, rested from his work, and He consecrated the seventh period of time for the purpose of commemorating this mighty thought: now this is the cause, and no other, which demands primarily of us to observe the Sabbath. Can therefore any other event deserve a similar consecration? or what is more, have we in reason any warrant for demanding of each other to abstain weekly from labour on a particular day other than the one instituted in the Decalogue? But it is evidently either that one or none; either we must obey the whole requirement of the fourth commandment, or abrogate it altogether, granting that we have the right to do so, which is, however, not the case; since no authority whatever can destroy what the Lord has ordained. Where, then, is the remotest

cause for the change of the seventh to the first day of the week, which the Nazarenes have instituted? where the warrant for so defying the evident meaning of the law of God? There is one excuse for them,—they are not the children of Israel; wherefore the Sabbath was not given to them as a token of the covenant between their generations and the Lord, a covenant into which they have never yet entered, despite of all their ingenious false pleading. They therefore are permitted to set aside, by civil enactments or by religious councils, any one day in seven, to abstain thereon from labour; but it is absurd, contrary to religion, to call it the Sabbath; for this it is not, and it never can be so either; the law is fixed for a particular day; the signification of it is peculiar and unchangeable; no other event, real or imaginary, can therefore stamp any other day out of the seven with the seal of divine approbation, more especially if it is contended that such an institution has repealed the true day of the Lord, the seventh day Sabbath. But how much more sinful must it be in men who call themselves the sons of Jacob debating about transferring the Sabbath to the first day; and how unreasonable is it for them to institute a public worship on that day for those who, pursuing their business on the Sabbath, prevent themselves and their families from entering the house of God to worship, and to be instructed on that holy rest, which He has sanctified by his example, his blessing, and his word. It is painful to speak harshly of our erring brothers; but it were sacrilege not to condemn those who violate knowingly the precepts of Heaven, and then endeavour to gloss over the crime by pretending to

offer up a sacrifice of prayer and devotion on a day not known to our fathers, not demanded by God.

All I meant to assert in the preceding is, that religion is not perfect without a careful observance of form, that is, an implicit obedience to the divine commandments. These include all the requirements of humanity, not excepting one deed of mercy, not one act of benevolence; wherefore in fulfilling them we precisely accomplish our task on earth in every respect. Whatever, therefore, of positive precepts we have received is equally sacred with all others; we cannot distinguish between the holiness of one command and of the other, because we lack the measure of comparison. For instance, the institution of the water of purification, of which we have read today, is one of the class of ceremonies proper, and of this it is said:

והזה הטהר על הטמא ביום השלישי וביום השביעי וחטאו ביום השביעי וכבס בגדיו ורחץ במים וטהר בערב : במד' יט' יט':

"And the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day; and when he hath purified him on the seventh day, then shall he wash his clothes and bathe himself in water, and he shall be clean at evening." Numb. xix. 19.

And however trifling all these directions, from which this is a part, may appear to our cold reasoning, we have to abide by them, as they are commanded by the same God who required of us to love our neighbours as ourselves. He instituted, let us not forget, the ceremonies, embracing the sacrifices, to mark his people as peculiarly devoted to propagate

slowly, yet surely, the knowledge of his sole existence all over the earth. Now whereas other nations built mausoleums and temples over their mighty dead, and deified their deceased heroes; and whereas churches of modern civilized nations still present the appearance of a graveyard, as places for the commemoration of human dust: his temple was to be free from such pollution, from such enshrining of mortal vanity within the precincts of the Most Holy. And to guard against any approach of an infringement in this matter, He ordained all dead bodies to be unclean in the highest degree, and those who touched them to be defiled for a space, till they had been purified according to the ordained ceremony. We will not now endeavour to elucidate the various acts of purification, nor the nature of the peculiar sacrifice required for it; as it will be enough to refer to the general principle, that it was an imperative ordinance founded for us on the wisdom and will of God solely. For which reason it rests upon a base similar to that of other commandments and prohibitions, and a child of faith asks for no more.

But it will be urged at length, "Do you really believe that your acts of ceremony will be enough to insure you salvation? What merit is there in your doing ever so much of mere outward things? do you thereby please God? Is not something more besides, something which you cannot yourselves give, needed to obtain atonement?" To this we may reply in these simple and true words: We act according to the Bible; God asked of us to do whatever He has written for our guidance; it is true we may often sin; no doubt our course is not what it ought to be. Never-

theless there is nothing asked of us which is not within our power; the sacrifice of our own spirit is all which is asked; and should this not be enough, which God's mercy forbid, there is for us no redemption from the divine wrath. But it is enough! God values the deed we perform, because we do it in obedience to his word; and when we have sinned, He promises us his forgiveness, for his own sake, if not for ours; as it is written in Ezekiel, "And I will sprinkle upon you clean water, and you shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you." (xxxvi. 25.) If this be not a glorious and sure promise, there is none contained in Scripture, none ever emanated from the Supreme. But language so direct, so consoling, must sink deeply into our hearts. Let nations then revile you, let our own sinners decry your acts of devotion: do you stand firm, all ye who trust in the Lord, and serve your Father truly, in humility and faith; and be assured that what is not revealed to you in this life will become clear and manifest hereafter, and know that whatever deed you perform in the name of the Lord will redound to your improvement and his glory, and will bring down on you blessings without measure. Amen.

Adar 22d. } 5609.
March 16th. }

DISCOURSE IX.

ISRAEL'S PERPETUAL FREEDOM.

O HOLY ONE! how can a mortal adore Thee? Behold he gropes in darkness, in the insufficient light of his own reasoning, and seeks in vain to comprehend Thee and thy works, and he stands confounded at the immensity of thy power, and the vast extent of thy dominion. What then can such as he offer as worthy of thy acceptance? or can he do aught commensurate with thy greatness? But it was thy gracious pleasure to teach us how to adore Thee, and how to offer up an homage which Thou wouldst accept, though brought to thy holy presence by hands defiled by transgression, and by hearts that have felt the corruption of sin. Not great deeds dost Thou ask, not acts in correspondence with thy holiness and power, but simple words, acts in accordance with our limited reason and limited strength, deeds which man can offer, and which are only worthy of acceptance, because thy gracious will sanctifies the thought and hallows the act. Deign therefore, O merciful God! to have regard to our prayers and to accept our obedience to thy commandments, though both fall far short of the perfection of prayer and the fulness of obedience, and bless the means which we employ, to become the source of a great increase of thy kingdom, so that all of us may be strengthened to listen to thy

instruction, and to devote ourselves to Thee all our days; in order that truth and mercy may pursue us all the years of our life, and we be rendered worthy to dwell in thy house unto everlasting. Amen.

BRETHREN!

We say daily in our evening-service among the other praises of the Most High with which Israel addresses Him after the sun has set, and when the stars are summoned to keep their watch in the vault of the firmament, the following words:

האל העשה לנו נקמה בפרעה באותות ובמופתים
באדמת בני חם : המכה בעברתו כל בכורי מצרים
ויוציא את עמו ישראל מתוכם לחרות עולם :

"He is the God who avenged us on Pharaoh, by signs and miracles wrought in the land of the children of Ham. In his wrath He slew the first-born of Egypt and brought out his people Israel from among them unto perpetual freedom."

Perhaps some of you may have pondered over the concluding words, "unto perpetual freedom," and if they felt deeply for the sorrows of Israel, for the awful slavery with which iron oppression loaded our weary limbs, may have asked themselves in the bitterness of heart, "Where is that boasted freedom of which our prayer speaks? where the perpetuity of that deliverance which was exacted from Pharaoh by the signs and wonders wrought of old in the land of the children of Ham, when God in his wrath slew the first-born of the tyrant and his oppressor-vassals, and broke the chains of Egyptian servitude? Where are his arrows that they sleep for so many centuries, when

they ought to have been made drunk in the blood of the persecutors and enslavers, whose eye pitied not, whose hand spared not the outcast remnant of Jacob's sons?" No doubt many thinking persons may have thought so; and in their sorrowful indignation at the hard fate which was the lot of our people for so many centuries, they may have arraigned the sincerity of the wise men to whose almost inspired wisdom we owe our form of prayers, for inditing words which are not founded in truth, and thus inducing us to offer up an insincere offering before Him who knows the secret thoughts of the human heart, and to whom falsehood is an abomination, and duplicity the defiler of the highest sacrifice. But if you take a careful view of what was effected through our deliverance from Egypt, you will be convinced that the prayer is one which the lover of truth may freely utter, and which the God of truth will accept as an offering of the human heart for the greatest benefit Heaven conferred on his world.

Let us look what the condition of the Israelites in Egypt was, and you will have a complete answer to the objection which may thus have been raised in your mind. There is something in domestic slavery, a state in which one man is entirely subjected to another's will, which is well calculated to crush all feelings of independence, and to rob the mind of the elasticity which freedom alone can impart. At the time of our residence on the shores of the Nile it was not as now, that literature is sent widely over the earth in a million of publications of various kinds, and thus reaches occasionally even the bondmen likewise; but all learning was confined to those who be-

longed to the learned classes, to those who would have access to the expensive books transcribed by the hand of man, and therefore not within the reach of those who were regarded as inferior by their proud masters. Even as it is this day, that learning is so generally diffused, the grossest ignorance is the lot of the slave, nay in this country, which justly boasts of its refinement and advance in civilization: how much more is it then to be expected that almost total mental darkness must have rested on the spirit of the Israelites in Egypt, unless we assume that the superior mental capacity of the Abrahamic race above all others was enabled to preserve them from the fate of all other bondmen. But if we regard what travellers say about the ignorance of the slaves in Oriental countries, of men and women fairer and more beautiful than our own people, with minds as capacious for knowledge as any other class of men: it would assuredly look like presumption to imagine that we alone of all mankind should be able, under any circumstance, to escape the contagion of debasing influences, so as to be elevated above the fate which naturally befalls other classes so situated as we were in Egypt. Experience farther teaches us that slaves by degrees lose their religious identity, and they become in a few ages at farthest what their masters wish them to be; and for this history may be appealed to as establishing the point beyond dispute;* and we constantly see slaves merged in superstition perhaps which they have inherited from their fathers, yet con-

* Though it may be admitted that some of a slave-race preserve their ancient traditions, as the Africans have done in America, still the majority, nearly all, copy the religion of their superiors.

forming outwardly to religious practices, and imbibing the religious notions which their masters teach them. Taking this view of the subject we only come to the conviction that, in addition to the bodily slavery which we had to submit to in Egypt, our souls were doomed to an equal, nay to a deeper state of degradation, and that we must have learned to conform our acts and thoughts to the pattern set us by our task-masters. It is indeed the opinion of some of our teachers that we had sunk deeply in the uncleanness of the refined idolaters who then bore rule over us, and that we had forgotten the God of our fathers, who is holy and true. It is according to this idea nothing very wonderful that Moses found it perhaps as difficult to convince the Israelites of the truth of his mission, as he did in obtaining their freedom from Pharaoh. It was unbelief engendered by hardship, aided by the bad example of the Egyptians, which closed their hearts against the message of liberation, whilst selfishness and pride produced the same result in the mind of the king. You will therefore understand the message which God delivered to Moses in Exodus vi. 6, 7, "Therefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments; and I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you for a God; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, who bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians." The only meaning of this passage is in the simplest form, that the Israelites themselves had doubts of the truth of God, if they

had even not forgotten his worship altogether; and hence the Lord promises that He would so act towards their oppressors, that He would so entirely remove the burdens resting upon them, and effect all this in so extraordinary a manner, that they would have to acknowledge that the Being who would do this must indeed be the almighty, eternal, and only One, who spoke to them by the messenger whom He had sent to them.

Let us, therefore, assume it as proved that the moral state of our fathers was sunk very low when the Most High appeared as an Avenger of their wrongs, and caused, through the death of the first-born of the Egyptians, the mandate of their dismissal to be pronounced by lips that formerly defied the power of the Lord of hosts; and indeed it was such a display of irresistible force which no mortal could have encompassed, and which, therefore, struck terror into the hearts of the most obdurate. Men could resist the horrors of all the plagues which desolated their land, and laid bare their fields; they could, at the recurrence of any new calamity, fortify their obstinacy and imagine it was all in the course of nature, though this servant of God never exhibited herself before or since habited in such awful garments as she then wore, nor wrought such manifold and diversified mischief in any devoted land as she did in that country. But so incredulous is the human heart, so prone are we to rely on our own wisdom, or what we imagine to be such, that each lesson, as it had been fearfully taught, had barely passed away ere the feelings were seared again, and the wounds had to be struck afresh to be as evanescent as on the preceding occasion.

But when the Lord passed through Egypt in the mid of the night of the first Feast of Unleavened Bread; when in the serene sky, and amidst the gladsome light of the moon and starlit heaven there was death in every house; when without sickness or premonitory symptom the son of the king and of the slave dropped as though perforated by an unseen hand; when there was death among men, death among cattle, destruction even among the idols which served to the Egyptians as the emblems of their gods, and when they reflected that all this took place at the precise time and in the precise manner it had been foretold by the prophet Moses: they could not help being overwhelmed with the conviction that longer resistance was vain and useless; for they were all doomed to fall by the same Power, as they justly conceived, should they longer hesitate yielding their full assent to the demand for the freedom of their bondmen.—Now observe, it was not the mere dismissal of even two millions of slaves which was effected; for it is possible that this might have been accomplished through the free assent of their rulers, if their interest had prompted them to accomplish so improbable an act of grace. But the manner in which it was forced upon the obdurate worshippers of a multitude of gods, compelled them to acknowledge that there exists a Power far above what their deities could lay claim to; and in brief, that there is nothing which could resist the God in whose name Moses spoke. This conviction was not only forced on the Egyptians, but on those Israelites likewise who in the first instance had refused to listen to the message which promised them enlargement and freedom, when

they would not hear Moses "for anguish of spirit and for cruel bondage." If this class of unwilling hearers comprised the whole people, then it effected a conversion of the whole; and if they were only a portion, whilst many yet were faithful even under trials, then the prophet now beheld that all did join with him in believing in the truth of the One who dwelt in the thorn-bush in the desert of Horeb, and that all Israel were now convinced that the God of Abraham had indeed appeared to the new messenger, to effect for them the fulfilment of prophecies made centuries before.

We have, therefore, a twofold liberation wrought through the Exodus from Egypt, the one of the body, the other of the spirit. The unchained slaves were not sent over the earth like a herd of savage beasts loosened from their dens to sweep over the earth to destroy and to devour; but they were taken from a fruitful land where the bland sky and fair earth unite to sloth and repose, whilst they also excite to cruelty and the forgetfulness of other men's wrongs and sorrows, and carried into the howling wilderness of the stony Arabia, to be educated in the school of affliction and hunger, in the absence of luxury and enjoyment, to become familiar with higher joys, with a spiritual elevation, which spring from a knowledge of the ways of the Most High. The body had been disenthralled from the galling chains of outward servitude, the moment the king consented to let them go free; but there was still a cloud on their soul, a darkness overshadowing their spirit, which had to yield before their freedom was finally accomplished. It would have been nothing in the divine economy

whether we had remained in Egypt or not, if a higher benefit had not resulted from our freedom than our slavery, to the world at large. Why it is, we cannot tell; but we find oppression in all ages, and the afflicted shed tears of anguish, with none to behold them save the One who sees and governs all. But as everything has its use, so must affliction also, even when falling on large masses, have its beneficial ends; and the lives of the sufferers from other's wrongs, we may be assured, will not be left unfruitful in the general result, which is gradually filling up the distant vista in the field of history. Man's life individually, too, is not limited by the years he lives on earth; his end, therefore, is not reached when he breathes his last here; and his sufferings, accordingly, after having been endured even for a long time, leave him still ages of unalloyed happiness, which he may enjoy should his conduct merit a happy future. The simple bondage of our fathers in Egypt could not, therefore, have elicited all the display of divine power, if nothing but their bodily freedom could have been effected; or else we must accuse God of injustice for allowing the powerful to oppress the weak in by far larger masses than were our fathers in Egypt. The divine economy, as I have said, must, therefore, have had a far higher view in taking so especial a notice of us; and this we may assume at once to be the educating of Israel to be a people freed from the contamination of superstition and unbelief. In fact we read, also, in the first revelation which Moses received (Exod. iii. 12), "And this shall be unto thee a token that I have sent thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall

serve God upon this mountain." It was not to revel on luxuries, to enjoy dainties, and to live at ease, to be mere mortals in taste and habit, that the Lord revealed himself to us; but that we might learn to worship Him, to know his ways, and to fear his word. Horeb had been the scene where Moses's enraptured eye was first startled by the miracle of a brilliant fire's not consuming the stunted bush which grew in the desert, where the flame raged in unsurpassed splendour without bringing destruction to that shrub on which it apparently fed; and it was, therefore, that very spot which was chosen as the scene of a yet higher, brighter, more brilliant and wonderful illumination, as the spot where the law was to be kindled in the souls of those who fear the Lord, where, too, it shall burn without consuming on what it feeds, but lend it strength and beauty, becoming brighter and fairer as the physical forces diminish, and to shine with a renewed light, even when the mortal frame has fallen into death and decay. If even darkness should have still remained in the heart of the Israelites when they first left the land of the children of Ham, it was not to remain long there to check the growth of a new hope and of the new faith which had just been planted there; but it was decreed that they should travel onward to the mountain of Horeb, to learn there how to live as men in covenant with the Lord. We may, therefore, explain allegorically the verse 17 of Exod. xiii.: "And it came to pass when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God did not lead them the way of the land of the Philistines, because it was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and return to

Egypt," that it means that as long as the people had not become used to the divine rule, whilst yet they were contaminated with the principles of false worship, which they had learned in servitude, they could not be permitted to enter on their inheritance in Palestine, going through the land of Philistia, which was convenient, and affording ample sustenance for the body; lest on the first difficulty in life which might present itself, they would forget their new allegiance, and return spiritually as well as bodily to the land and manners of Egypt, by which the object of their liberation could have been frustrated. God led them, therefore, into the wilderness, into a land which is not sown, where savage monsters lie undisturbed in their dens, and the foot of man does not venture to tread; and there He brought them by degrees to that knowledge of himself which is our "wisdom and intelligence in the eyes of nations," and He manifested himself not only as the Avenger of the oppressed ones' wrongs, but also as the Counsellor, as the Father, the Teacher of mankind, exhorting them to choose what is good, to be pleasing to their Benefactor, and to lead themselves forward those who are not yet instructed.

We call this divine manifestation of God as Lawgiver the liberation of our souls. Well do the Talmudists say, "There is no one a freeman who studies not the law;" because when we forget our accountability to God, and run riot in the indulgence of our passions, we are coward-slaves to a base and debasing appetite, though we might be seated on a throne, and a million of bondmen stand trembling at our very nod, and our breath could scatter death among all

who approached our presence. Not thus is man free; but when he rises above himself, conquers the ill-will, the inclination to evil which dwells within him, and shows that he deserves the distinction of being made in the image of God: then is he liberated from mental thraldom, and he is emancipated from slavery to vice, inasmuch as he has become a faithful servant of the Lord, whose service is the height of freedom, and whose rule is peace and contentment among men. Not so is the subjection to mortals; blind obedience to the mandates of one as fallible as ourselves, an entire acquiescence in his teaching can only lead us into error and mischief; since there is nothing in human reason to be always certain and sure, both in acts and in thoughts. No matter therefore how good and wise a man may be, we cannot implicitly follow his advice; but when God teaches, when He asks of us an entire surrendering of our will, we may freely become his servants and follow Him whithersoever He may lead us; for we are sure that the highest Wisdom guides us, and that every deed of ours will be advantageous to us and all others. "Much peace is there for those who love thy law, and there is no stumbling to them," says the inspired poet; and in surety there is peace on the way which is marked out by the Lord in his law, and whoever treads the path of the commandments need not fear that he will stumble in his course; for though it be beset with dangers and difficulties, these will ultimately tend to enhance the undying praise which is to be acquired only on the road of righteousness.

By liberty of the spirit, by the freedom of the soul, we understand accordingly a conscientious regard for

the divine will which has been imparted to us, and by which alone we can safely direct our conduct. If now we praise God for the everlasting freedom which was imparted to us when the first-born of Egypt were slain, it is not merely for the breaking of the chains of slavery, which dismissed us forever from the service of our oppressors, but also for the divine enlightenment which we received in consequence of that event. And ever since we have been distinguished by means of it among mankind. For ages after we had stood at the foot of Horeb were we the only people who knew of the truths as there revealed, and to this very day we are the only ones who walk in the true and simple light of the Lord: whilst every other people follows out what its fallible human teachers have endeavoured to impose on the world as the only truth. But, alas! that we should be compelled to say it, we were not left unmolested in thus pursuing the object of our selection; with fierce cruelty nation after nation endeavoured to extinguish the handful of Jacob's sons from being a people; and the wantonness of malice invented daily new tortures to aid it in its warfare against the Lord and his priestly kingdom. But He who called our father Abraham from the East, has ever watched over the vine* which He had planted; He permitted it to be pruned by unskilful vintners, He allowed the leaves to be stripped by those who regarded not the safety of the parent stem; He looked on to see the fruit devoured by those who laboured only for its destruction; but still the stem has not lost its vigour, and it draws to

* Compare with Psalm lxxx.

this hour its sustenance from the soil through its thousand roots, which spread over rock and cliff, and which are struck deeply in the healthy soil, which maintains it in vigour and strength. Well may we say, "From the Lord was this produced, yea, it is wonderful in our eyes;" and who that is of Israel can help raising his heart in thankfulness to God, that He was pleased to watch so sedulously, so wonderfully, over the development of our people, that amidst the utmost variety of vicissitudes we have never lost our identity, in all ages and under all circumstances?

Let those who do not believe in an overruling Providence, or who pretend to think that it is obstinacy on our part which has preserved us, but not the superintending care of a Father over his children, aver that they behold nothing extraordinary in our being kept alive on the earth: let this not disconcert nor startle you; it is the old deriding of God's work which has always characterized unbelievers and fanatics. But do you, who believe in God as He has taught you to believe, not falter for one moment at the constant efforts made to diminish you, or to mislead you away from your faith. You were indeed redeemed from Egypt unto perpetual freedom; but not so much in the exemption from the yoke of man, to which our sins have again and again condemned us, as in being rid of the yoke of superstition and error which weighs heavily on the spirit of many inhabitants of the fairest portions of the globe. It has been your privilege to be taught of the Lord; and you are promised that you shall be the chief corner-stone on which the superstructure of human enlightenment

and mental freedom is at length to rest. Do you desire, each and all, to be distinguished in God's household on that blessed day, when all flesh shall see revealed the glory of God? when all error is to be banished, never more to return? If so, remain free yourselves in being servants to the beneficent Father who calls you his children, learn to know what He wishes you to do, and fortify yourselves, by a firm reliance on his goodness and truth, against the assaults of the world and the temptings of your passions. If you act thus, you will see clearly the goodness of God displayed in your preservation; you will feel proud of being members of Jacob's household, and you will behold undismayed the futile efforts made to destroy us; and you will be sure that, as all enemies of Israel have fallen under the divine vengeance, so will all sink who now endeavour to promote your fall. But on you and all who love the Lord the light of truth will shine, and the divine glory will be revealed over you, and you and all flesh shall acknowledge, when all is fulfilled, that the word of God is true and abiding forever. Amen.

Nissan 14th. } 5609.
April 6th. }

DISCOURSE X.

WARNING THE PEOPLE.

"THINE, O Lord! is the mercy; for Thou wilt reward every man according to his deeds;" this hast Thou taught us concerning thyself, in that Thou art mindful of whatever acts a man commits, and that never can anything escape thy cognizance, nor be forgotten in thy memory; since darkness hides nothing from Thee, nor does lapse of time diminish the strength of the impression which past events have made in thy presence. Thou hast also promised the son of Abraham that Thou wouldst bless him for the sake of the piety of his father.* Behold us, then, coming before Thee, to crave thy mercy for the deeds which the righteous of old have done, for those works which are constantly ascending up before thy throne, as an agreeable savour brought upon thy altar. Thy servants have gone to their rest, but we their descendants are left to battle with the dangers which they triumphantly overcame. Do, therefore, aid us for the treasured-up piety which Thou wilt ever remember,† and save us from the power of sin and temptation, that we also may fulfil our task, and be pleasing in thy eyes as those whose works have been accepted. So shall we, too, be found righteous in thy judgment, and receive the light of thy presence, the peace for

* Gen. xxvi. 5 and 24.

† Levit. xxvi. 45; comp. also with 2 Chron. vi. 42.

which our soul does pant, the reward which is the perfection of joy, the highest aim for which the living spirit is destined. Amen.

BRETHREN!

Judaism is true, not because other religions are false, but because it is true in itself. It has borrowed nothing from other systems, nor is it dependent upon their truth or falsity for its foundation. It must, nevertheless, be admitted that many of its principles are opposed to the views and doctrines promulgated by other religions; and in defending, therefore, what we have received as a heavenly legacy from our fathers, we may occasionally be compelled to examine controversially the opinions of other persuasions. But controversy is a legitimate weapon in the defence of truth; and when it is carried on in candour and fairness, the very persons, whose opinions we examine, cannot attach any blame to us for so doing; for our religion is regarded by all as the foundation for every system based on the truth of revelation, by all who admit that, at some period of the history of man, the Lord of Glory made his will manifest to mankind; and while, therefore, others claim that they have now a superior light, and while they invite us to forsake our faith to embrace theirs, it is evidently our business, as reasoning beings, to prepare ourselves by study and reflection to understand what we are to yield and what to accept. None, but one brutally ignorant, would cease to be a Jew because he is invited to change his belief, without questioning what he accepts; and if he claims to be instructed and enlightened, some personal interest and not conviction,

will be found to be the cause of the conversion. It is, therefore, evidently our duty to endeavour to scatter all the information accessible among our people, in order that they may be able to investigate understandingly the religion of their fathers. This religion, as you well know, is one of peace towards all men; it is the basis of civilization and true enlightenment; and we are, therefore, bound to value it, if for no other reason, because it is the first of all systems which aim at the happiness of mankind. Nevertheless, harmless as it is in its relation to all those not belonging to Israel, energetic as it is in its injunction to us to love all mankind, Judaism has had many opponents; in all ages it has been exposed to the malign attacks of those desirous to destroy it; and yet it appears as firmly rooted in the hearts of our people as ever, although it is not to be denied that an adherence to its practices is in many not as strict as it formerly was. Still, we must not lose sight of one fact, that a general dereliction is nothing new with us; for during the period of the first temple, there were many occasions when, to judge from the prophetic admonitions and the terrible denunciations which these holy messengers pronounced in the name of God, the observance of religion had almost ceased among those living in the land of Israel, with the exception of a few devoted hearts who would not forsake the standard of the ancient faith. It is, therefore, presumable, that what has occurred before will occur again, and that there will be an awakening to serious reflection among us, in the same measure as means are taken to destroy our adherence to religion; for you will find in the perusal of history, that no sooner did outward enemies

come over the Israelites to take from them, by the power of the sword, what they believed the truth, than they became inflamed with an ardent zeal to defend by argument, by endurance, and at times by force of arms, the religion of their fathers. It is, therefore, to be hoped, nay, to be expected, that in the present age of general delinquency a similar result will be witnessed, and that the lethargy which now appears to benumb our faculties, and render us spell-bound in the midst of apathy and indifference, will yield to a renewed zeal and energy, the moment we become aware that there is danger to our religion threatened through the insidious attacks, both open and secret, from enemies to Israel—from those worldings and adherents of falsehood, who have ever deemed the existence of the religion of Israel as a severe libel on their own belief. What is it to them, that many nations and powerful individuals bend the knee to them and their idols? It is as nothing, "whilst," to borrow the words of Scripture, "Mordecai the Jew sitteth at the gate of the king." They see him early, they behold him late; he bears a charmed life; he is gifted with ubiquity; let them traverse the ocean, they have him with them on board of the ship; let them ascend mighty rivers, they see his Asiatic features mingling with the crowd in the floating palace, or sitting side by side in the bark canoe with the tawny Indian; let them climb the highest mountain, and they will discover that he has before them carried thither his wandering staff; let them travel through sandy deserts, the surface of which is more unstable than the wavy sea, and they will find him established among the sooty sons of Africa, with his Jewish descent strongly

marked on his sunburnt visage, but also with the ancient book of the law in his possession. Yes, he is the universal contradiction to assumed facts; he has wandered, he has suffered, he has borne everything, and he remains the Jew at heart, changed as he may be by climate, by country, by association; and whether he be the rover of the desert, the shepherd in the mountains of Kurdistan, the agriculturist of Russia, the banker in the capitals, or the humble mechanic or tradesman in the towns of Europe, he is essentially the same: he contradicts by his presence, if not even in words, the popular systems of belief, and whilst he exists, the triumph of these is not complete; so long as the ancient bearer of civilization is not a convert to their tenets, their religions do not stand firm.

That the efforts made in accordance with this spirit of hostility are of a gigantic order, is what might be expected. Political influence of the most stringent order, the power of money in its amplest form, association of intellect of a high degree, the influence of the press in a multitude of publications, from the entire Bible, printed so as to advance sinister purposes, down to a paltry card or doublefaced tract—all these and many other instruments are employed to decoy or force us away from our religion; and it is not to be wondered at if occasionally we hear, that some stray sheep has been carried off from the flock by the prowling wolves who are hunting for their destruction. But let us ask, on the other hand, "What have the Jews done of late to counteract so much malevolence?" And we shall be grieved to receive in answer, that we are too disunited to do anything, nay, too much occupied with the mere affairs of life to

attempt doing aught in defence of our faith. Do I speak the truth? Or do I state a falsehood? Let each one answer who now hears me, or to whom a report of my words may be brought; our enemies are watchful, whilst we sleep; they endeavour to scatter the seed of darkness, whilst we refuse to harvest the rich truth which stands ripe in many a golden field ready to our hand; and yet our hands are not bound with fetters, nor are the chains of captivity fastened to our feet; the fear of the tyrant daily grows less and less, and he that formerly was ready to devour becomes hourly more the object of derision* to his former bondmen. And still where is our industry? Where is our energy? Where is our wonted wisdom? Do we feel nothing, see nothing but worldly interests? Or are we so supine, so neglectful of our patrimony that we care not how soon we dissipate it? that we heed not whether with us the legacy of so many centuries is to be scattered to the four winds of heaven, or retained and preserved forever?

It is a libel on freedom, that men are free only to become rich and to live at ease; the brute that is well fed in his master's stable, and is dressed up in a fine harness to drag his pleasure-carriage in a bright and sunlit day, is equally free, if this were all for which we ought to live; yes, a man might as well lose his high appreciation of truth, and his capacity for understanding the sublime and the beautiful, if these noble faculties are to lie dormant, and rust away uselessly in the all-absorbing pursuit of gain and pleasure.

* The reader is requested to call to mind the revulsions of 1848 and the consequent changes in the relation of the rulers to the ruled, not excluding the pope of Rome and his people.

Our pious ancestors thought and acted differently. They also could have enjoyed life in their day; they might, if so they had wished it, have become the associates of their countrymen in the pursuits then thought to be most fitting for the high-born and the noble; but they preferred the Jewish gabardine, the crowded ghetto, to be scorned and cuffed as Israelites, sooner than purchase a single indulgence by an appearance even of defection from their oppressed people. However refined we of the present day may be, however ignorant we may conceive those of former ages to have been: no one can deny that in all that is appealing to the spirit for admiration, on account of a dauntless perseverance in a line of duty, in a conscientious discharge of what they conceived to be true and right, they are far in advance of us, so immeasurably far, that the best of us must, in regard to them, be compared to a deformed cripple, running a race with one swift of foot and sound in limbs. I do not say this because I would desire the return of days such as are gone, nor because they had not their evils; for let us pray that it may be the will of God, that such a cup of bitterness as we had then to drain may never again be presented to our lips, if his providence does not deem this necessary to our being preserved intact as the nation of Israel. No, I do not praise the days that are gone in comparison with the freedom which we now enjoy. I prize too highly the privilege which is mine at the present moment in being able to stand up among you, brethren, and to speak fearlessly and boldly about the concerns of eternal life; to canvass freely, without dread from the civil arm, the wrongs which are done to us, and

the sins which are committed by ourselves. But I only speak of the little concern which we display with respect to our religious interests in comparison with our fathers. They wrote about their faith, they treasured up for us imperishable truths, amidst perils which would now appal the stout-hearted warrior, who flinched not in the heat of battle; they breathed under the dread of the torture; they ate their scanty morsel apprehending to be taken to execution, or to be overpowered by a furious mob, led on by fanatical priests or designing demagogues: and still they continued to study their faith in all its bearings, and to teach it by all the light of the sciences accessible to them in their days. But we, answer me, do we pursue religion as a vital concern, as the glorious martyrs, who left us their lives as a legacy, did in all their troubles? Do we, as a class, glorify our religion by our conduct? do we teach it with all our energy to those who are to live after us? or, on the contrary, are not many thirsting for the water of life without any one being there to give it to them? We are increasing in this land—daily new accessions are made to our numbers; but religion remains the concern of a few, the many are indifferent; they have done enough in building a synagogue, and repairing thither once or twice a year! But the schools whence are to go forth the law and the light —where are they? where are the teachers who are to inculcate the words which God has taught? We are free, we are prosperous, but we calculate too closely the chances of success; we are too parsimonious to venture on an extensive plan of usefulness, for fear of the outlay, for fear of failure. But while

prudence is requisite, while blind zeal is like a torch in the hand of a madman, which can only destroy, it is not acting in faith, not acting as friends of religion, to wait, and wait; to let the precious years, I will not say moments, pass by without attempting something to rescue our blessed religion from the dangers which threaten her. See her standing on an elevated hill, the rising sun surrounding with a golden light her holy head; see her stretching out her angelic hands to rescue from destruction her beloved children, who hasten forward through dangerous coverts unmindful of the hidden perils; hear her calling on you all to aid her in her efforts to preserve them from the jaws of devouring beasts; behold her tears flow at being compelled, for want of strength, to see many destroyed without the means of helping them, and then feel that it is your fault, your neglect, your deafness to her earnest appeals that she weeps for her ensnared offspring; that it is owing to your indolence that her labours have been in vain, that her warning voice did not reach all who, though in peril, might have been saved by a timely admonition that danger lurked by the way, that enemies were watching in the by-paths, and then flatter your conscience by a false excuse that the rescue was beyond your power, the admonishing a business which religion had no right to ask at your hands.

We complain of the decline of religion among us, some even express a fear of its extinction in the course of time. Now, the latter result need not be feared; for the same Providence who has watched over us so long, will, by his watchfulness, guard us against annihilation. But we have no right to look forward to a

special act of grace to be wrought in our behalf, when we have ourselves the means of doing what is required. The Bible says:

והזרתם את בני ישראל מטמאתם ולא ימותו בטמאתם בטמאם את משכני אשר בתוכם :

ויקרא טו' לא' :

"And you shall warn the children of Israel against their uncleanness, that they may not die in their uncleanness, when they make unclean my dwelling, which is in the midst of them." Lev. xv. 31.

This verse, taken from our section of to-day, teaches us that a defilement, through bodily uncleanness specified in the law, of the sanctuary of the Lord, would cause the death of the transgressors through the infliction of Heaven, the punishment not being surrendered to human tribunals; whilst at the same time those who have received knowledge are charged to warn the people, and to teach them to distinguish between what is clean and that which is unclean. The people should obey the priests, who were to point out to them when a man had the leprosy, and when he was cured from it; but the priests, too, must not be satisfied with a mere knowledge of the details of the law for their own pleasure (for the possession of superior knowledge confers a delight on the soul); but they should lay it open to the masses, that they might know how to guide themselves on all occurrences, and to distinguish at once between what may be done, and what is prohibited. Though at present the institution of the ancient Aaronic priesthood has lost a great deal of its importance and signification, as we have neither temple nor sacrifices, no tithe nor

heave-offerings: still the spirit of the precept is with us, and this says to us, "And you shall warn the children of Israel." And to the question, "Who is included in the term you?" I would answer, every one of us who has received knowledge, every one who has the means of aiding in the diffusion of instruction, every one who can encourage the teachers of religion to go abroad to scatter the seeds of life. All are admonished to take due care that religion should not decline, or rather that its followers should not be diminished; that, if possible, not a single disciple of Moses should be lost, if by instruction, persuasion, admonition, kindness, or rebuke, he may possibly be retained true to his God, or if he has left, it be at all possible to reclaim him to the path of rectitude and truth. It is, however, wonderful how easily many satisfy their conscience in regard to the amount of their exertions. "We have done enough, all that can be expected," is often heard when we are asked concerning our spiritual labours. But how would it stand with us were the question varied to, "Have you done all that could be accomplished?" This is the proper test, and it is to be feared that, tried by this standard, the most of us, if not all, would be found wanting in their duty, be found to have left undone nearly everything which was practical and accessible to them.

It is very easy to frame a measure of our own which is to satisfy our love of ease. But all such half-way exertions are certainly not doing our whole duty, and still we are perfectly content in practice with half-measures; we never think about the unprepared state in which, in modern times, youths and maidens are sent out into the busy scenes of life, to encounter the

perils which the craft of our opponents, and which their own passions prepare against their progress in religion. And then we wonder often that such a one has intermarried with the gentiles, or that another has openly joined some one of the many subdivisions, which singularly enough form the universal church of the Nazarenes. I speak of these because we live among them, though possibly a similar result may be witnessed in Mahomedan countries. Yes, we wonder at such defections, as though they were not the most natural things in the world. You are lax in your religious observances at home, you read no religious books, your houses are not open to the familiar intercourse with pious and intelligent Israelites; on the contrary, you do what the law prohibits; you permit pernicious reading to become a familiar exercise of your children; you speak disparagingly of your own people, whilst you welcome with open arms as constant visitors, exclusively, those who are strangers to Israel; you go, and permit your charges to repair to public meetings, and to drink in unprepared the sophistry which is often so powerfully declaimed from gentile pulpits by fashionable preachers; or you take them to hear infidel lecturers declaiming against all religion: and do you wonder that your children are not good Jews? that they do not love their religion? that one or the other of them shows a fondness for the strangers and their doctrines, and turns his back on the paternal home, and seeks for alliance, and sympathy, and consolation, in the tents of the stranger? I only wonder that this so seldom occurs; I wonder at the strength and simplicity of our faith, which is propagated and maintained in the minds of

its adherents, under so many discouraging circumstances, under disadvantages which would overwhelm any system less perfect than ours. But now look at the result with calm and dispassionate eyes, and what does it say to you? Simply this: "If Judaism has preserved itself without our doing the least for it, how much more gloriously would it have flourished, how few defections would there have been from its ranks, had we done our duty in teaching it early and late, making it the subject of domestic conversation, seeking for light from those well informed, and encouraging pious men and women to be constant visitors at our house; had we religiously attended on public worship, and taken our children always with us; in short, had we done that for the faith of Israel, which other religions do for what they profess to believe in."

A great deal can thus be done by single individuals to remedy the evils which now oppress us, by each one's exerting his best influence over those whom the ties of nature, or other circumstances, have placed under his control. But why should we act without a plan? why not unite our energies for the promotion of a general good? Why do we not establish schools, where the daily practice, the daily lesson, and the constant intercourse, look only to the perfection of the mind in that which is most valuable in life? where science and religion are to go hand in hand, enkindling in the soul an ardour for what is true and beautiful, for what is to bless the child of earth here and hereafter? It is well, indeed, in the absence of a better system, to make the education in religion a weekly exercise; but it is not enough, it does not thus become a part and parcel of our being; whereas

we ought to be so united to our faith, that we may be able to act in its spirit, and according to its letter, in every emergency of life; to be ready to defend it with argument whenever it is assailed, and to sacrifice for it our passions, our inclinations, our interests, should these come in conflict with its behests. We require for this end a combination of individual powers, so that many may be able to accomplish what is too much for the strength of the individual.

It is thus our duty to warn our brothers against all sin, and this against any departure from the duties of religion, as pointed out to us in the law; and if we fail in this through any neglect of ours (Ezek. iii. 18), we are the guilty parties, should any one forsake our household through want of knowledge of the principles and practice of Judaism. Let us not forget that "there is a lion in the way, a leopard in the streets," and let it be our study to teach all of Israel how they may escape from the danger which is always threatening them. A child, indeed, can understand what Judaism is in its main cardinal doctrine; the first dawning intellect can be taught that God is one, blessed be his Name forever; but it requires time, it demands labour, so to impress this simple truth, that it may not be obscured by doubts and specious false teachings in after life. We may defy open attacks; but we must guard against secret machinations, exerted against the young and ignorant, by which they are to be lured away. Therefore are you told, "And you shall warn the children of Israel;" a warning is a lesson often repeated, and strongly enforced; and only by carrying out this precept to its fullest extent do you discharge your duty to one another, and only

thus can you say that you have educated your children to be staunch adherents to Judaism and heirs of everlasting life, after the manner and in the spirit of your glorious ancestors. Amen.

Iyar 5th.
April 27th. } 5609.

DISCOURSE XI.

THE INSTRUCTION AT SINAI.

O Lord of glory! Thou who didst shine forth unto thy people, when Thou didst teach them thy law on Mount Sinai, and cause them to hear thy words from the midst of the flames of fire, deign to enlighten our spirit likewise in the manner Thou didst unto our forefathers. They lived in an age when thy worship was known to only a few who had not forgotten thy instruction; wherefore Thou didst vouchsafe to take unto thyself a nation redeemed from the midst of another nation, to be the bearers of thy truth and thy law to the ends of the earth. And we have now arisen after them, their descendants and heirs, like them educated to be thy heritage, like them alone among the families of the earth, like them exposed to the malevolence of those who are strangers to thy worship. O, do Thou therefore strengthen our hearts, confirm our souls in thy fear, that we may advance boldly like the lion among the denizens of the forest, not dreading the crowds which surround us, and overcoming, upheld by thy protecting arm, all the difficulties and dangers

which beset our path. We have no power to prevail by the strength of numbers, nor by the use of carnal arms; for since we have been taken to be thy servants we have ever continued few among the sons of man, though distinguished among all, as the young lion among the cattle of the field. Be Thou, therefore, around us a shield of defence, as Thou hast been to our fathers; guide us securely on the path which we ought to walk; enlighten our mind that we may understand the wonders of thy revelation; procure for us the good-will of the nations of the earth; and cause that we may be enabled to distinguish between the truth and the falsehood, and to defend with reason and persuasive eloquence the legacy Thou hast bestowed on us as the heritage of the congregation of Jacob. So shall we also in our persons and those of our descendants continue to be thy people, as were the ransomed from Egypt, to bear testimony to thy power and greatness, forever more. Amen.

Brethren!

This day is the anniversary of the promulgation of the law from the summit of Sinai, it is the anniversary of the birthday of the people of Israel, and of the birthday of enlightened civilization and mental freedom. Compare it to any other day that ever dawned since the creation, and all sink into insignificance before it. And well was it ushered in after the manner it is described in the Bible:

ויהי ביום השלישי בהית הבקר ויהי קלת וברקים וענן כבד על ה׳הר וקל שפר חזק מאד ויחרד כל העם אשר במחנה : שמות יט׳ טז׳ :

"And it came to pass on the third day, at the dawn of the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a heavy cloud was upon the mount, and the voice of the cornet was exceedingly loud; so that all the people that were in the camp trembled." Exod. xix. 16.

Fifty days before that day the Israelites had gone out from the land of their long and weary servitude; since then the Red Sea had been divided for them, and they had passed through on dry ground, between piled up walls of mighty waters; the spring of Marah, unfit for drink, had been made sweet for them through the means of the tree which the prophet had been bidden to cast into the water, upon the inspiration of the Most High; manna had been showered down unto them from heaven, that they might eat bread for which they had not laboured, and be fed abundantly in a land which cannot be sown; again the rock of Horeb was made to send forth copious streams on being struck by the staff of the prophet, by which the congregation and their cattle had enough to drink; and when at last the warlike hordes of Amalek had surprised them, whilst they were faint and weary in the desert, they had successfully overcome this danger too under the guidance of the son of Nun, upheld as he was by the prayer of Moses. Thus every step they had taken had been to them a new evidence of the power and mercy of their Redeemer; and now had dawned the day on which they had been told that the Lord would appear to them in a thick cloud, to speak in their presence with the man who had been made the instrument of their redemption. And what a dawn it was! such a one as no man ever saw, and as probably will not

be again till the resurrection of the dead, when all shall be adjudged to life or to death, as the Lord may deem them deserving. And lo! all around them the sky was serene; but on Sinai there rested a thick cloud, and from the centre of that cloud there issued forth flash upon flash, and one roll of thunder followed on the other, and the sound of the cornet blown by invisible beings, not tired by the exertion, but increasing in strength and distinctness as the sounds were produced; and all was harmony and glory amidst the convulsion of Nature which alone affected the mount chosen for the day as the residence of the Holy One of Israel. Well might the people tremble at beholding so strong a display of the awful power of Him they were called on to adore; it was proper that they should feel dread when assured that what they then saw was done, that they might learn to know that their God is the everlasting One, and that from Him alone proceed true knowledge and wisdom. It was a fitting close to the work of their redemption commenced so many days before; they had been upheld amidst the rush of water; the din of battle; the thirst and famine attending on those who traverse the wilderness in a state so unprovided as they were; and now they were in the presence of their Master, at the foot of the throne of Him who had wrought all this in their behalf; they were admitted to the very precincts of the majesty of the Governor of the world, in order that they might be taught simple truths, wholesome commandments, so that they might be fitted to be servants, intelligent followers of the great King of the universe.

But it was not merely an idle pageant which they

beheld; it was not merely to strike terror on the present beholders that the Lord did descend on that day; but the object was that what was seen then should not be forgotten, and that the impression should remain indelibly fixed to all generations. For these are the words of Scripture, "That the people may hear when I speak to thee, and in thee also they shall believe forever." The words which were then to be spoken should not be like other words, to be remembered or forgotten as circumstances may favour, or otherwise; but no; they were to become incorporated with the feelings, habits, and thoughts of the people; they should become their religion, their morals, their political code; they should be applicable to infancy, youth, manhood, and decrepit age; suited for male and female; for bondman and master; for the poor and the rich; for the simple and the wise; and in this manner they should be remembered forever, and the mission of the prophet, through whom they were afterwards delivered to the custody of the people on the two tables of the covenant, should be confided in whilst one of their descendants remained on earth. If now the unbeliever should say doubtingly, "Can it be true that the Most High should speak to man on earth? who can believe that He who governs the world, and sustains all with his will, should descend to instruct a handful of people in a law which they afterwards would not keep?" tell him that it is indeed true that so the Lord spoke, or else there would not exist that clear, unambiguous knowledge of Him which we have received from our fathers; and that it is becoming the Highest and Holiest to instruct himself the children of his crea-

tion, although from the sinfulness of their nature, and He not having laid any extraordinary coercion on their free will, they might, in the next instance, as they actually did, violate the laws of wisdom which they had received.

Men are apt to imagine that, because God is high and exalted, they are removed from his ken; they hide themselves beneath the shelter of their insignificance to work their pleasure, as though there existed no account and accountability. And it is on a par with such ideas, I suppose, that God could not himself become the Teacher as well as the Creator of man. But how can we limit the power of God? Shall we say that, because the highest is within his reach, the smallest escapes his view? that, because his glory fills the heaven of heavens, He does not care for the meanest of his creatures? And does He accomplish all, does He superintend all, is his providence extended over the mighty worlds that roll in infinite space: then it is necessary to admit that with the same eye with which He scans the vast extent of ether, He at once surveys the most distant, the most minute objects which comprise his world. There is no fatigue, no exertion in this superintending of details, of minor things, amidst the immense variety of objects which demand and receive the tenderest care of their Producer. An especial providence, or as the Rabbins term it השגחה פרטית, is, therefore, no labour, no exertion to Him whom we adore, but is the natural attribute of his omniscience, omnipresence, and almighty power; for, whilst He regards the inhabitants of the north star, assuming that it has its intelligent population, as has the earth, those that

dwell in Sirius or in the utmost extent of the South are not deprived of the presence and power of the Sustainer of the world. He is there, He is here; He is to-day as He was from the beginning, and as He will be when all, should so be his will, has crumbled away into dust, and the light of the sun is quenched, and the sea no longer beats against the sandy shore. Yes, even then the Lord would be supreme, all-powerful in himself, almighty Ruler, though the subjects had ceased; for even now they are all the products of his creation. We assert, therefore, as an established truth, that the dignity of God is not injured by his cognizance of all existing things, as little as He is circumscribed by distance and difficulties from effecting his will. No man is, therefore, removed from his watchfulness, even assuming that he is insignificant and unworthy in the estimation of his Maker; simply because it requires in him no exertion, no extraordinary care to bestow his watchfulness on all. But we have no right to suppose that God is indifferent to the fate and the deeds of his creatures. He has created them; He has fashioned them; He feeds and sustains them; He gives beauty to the rose, swiftness to the deer, brilliance to the diamond, and fleetness to the eagle; He clothes the hills with verdure, and imparts wisdom to the wise; He does all this and more, yea much more than the tongue can tell: and is He, can He, be careless of that which befalls his world? does any one seriously imagine that an evil should happen in a city and He not ordain it? that the rain should descend on the parched field, and He not have sent it? And so we may proceed with every occurrence which either rejoices or afflicts us, and

trace it up to its Source; and only thus can we rationally account for the many phenomena which daily fill us with wonder and astonishment. For events are linked to events; no man sees how the chain is lengthened; all imagine that their work is perfect,—with them disorder and tumult must cease; that they have discovered the remedy for the evils which afflict mankind. But let them proceed, they are but the blind workmen placed there to fulfil their task; and no matter how they strive against the will of the Supreme Director, no matter how they exalt themselves over the counsels of the Most High, time will show whose will shall prevail, whose building shall stand, whose plans shall be accomplished. Yea, our God is great, and holy is his word; his wisdom is unsearchable, and there is no end to his mercy and goodness. And whatever He ordains is well ordained; and as He governs, so is it best for the individuals and the entire mass of mankind, nay for the whole uncounted multitude of intelligent beings who fill his world, and for those bright angels of mercy that fulfil his commands in all creation.

If it is, then, not beneath the dignity of God to govern all with an especial providence, with a minuteness of superintendence of which we can form no conception: it is evident that He may as freely teach his children, as He gives them all they need for the support of their perishable bodies. For if this flesh, which grows and diminishes, which is hidden in the bosom of the earth, to moulder and to fall into dust, is so fenced in by divine solicitude; if every breeze that blows, if every blade of grass that shoots up from the ground, if the pearly dew and the beating rain,

the bright sun and the liquid light of the moon, all administer to its preservation and pleasure: should, then, the soul, which moulders not after death amidst the clods of the valley, which even on earth experiences no delight in the carnal food and the gratification of mere animal desires,—should this heavenly portion from the God above be alone thought unworthy of the Father's care, of the Creator's mercy? The very statement of the question carries its own answer along, and it says, then, that the care for the spirit, the instruction of the mind in true wisdom, must be the chief object of the God who is all-good and all-wise; or in other words, we must assume that not alone was it consonant with the dignity of God to become Himself the Teacher of mankind, but that it would be impugning his benevolence and truth to assume that He neglected giving them instruction. He might indeed have so constituted man, that he should know precisely what is right or wrong, true or false. But He has not done so, or else there would be but one standard of right and truth for all mankind. Now we know that this is not the case; consequently we are brought to the other prerequisite to reconcile the goodness with the justice of the Lord, and this is, that He has imparted, at some time and somewhere, to some one or many, the precise knowledge of right and truth; and we claim the period of the Exodus from Egypt as the time, the Mount Horeb as the place, and the people of Israel as the persons—as the when, where, and to whom the law or revelation of God was given. Enough for us, as evidence of all this, that we possess a law clear and emphatic in its teaching concerning God, ample and satisfactory with respect to

its demands of duties at our hands; and we claim that without a divine special interposition no such law could have been framed, no such law could have been promulgated; as since the time named nothing like it has been discovered.

You may yet say, that the proof is not complete; that other laws besides that known as the Mosaic law have been promulgated, or announced rather, as of divine origin. But not to enter into a diffuse argument, we must confine ourselves to one point. Its divinity is proved, first, by its consistency, by its brevity, by its permanency. Look at our constitution, I mean the Ten Commandments, and you discover reason and duty conjoined in them in one inseparable union. The first principle laid down, to build thereon the system of duties, is the simple announcement, that there exists an eternal, omnipotent God, who governs and surveys all things, who is our Protector and Benefactor. He is announced as the One who created the world, and leaves nothing without bestowing on it his attention, either to reward or to punish. That this must be so, is evident to human reason; we are endowed with intelligence, this we feel, this we know, if we feel and know anything whatever; but as this intelligence is diverse and unequal in the same person even, not to mention different individuals, we come to the conclusion, as the only natural one, that our wisdom is derived from a higher Source, which for want of a better term we will call the Supreme Intelligence. If now a Supreme Intelligence does exist, and if He has by his emanation endowed many inferior beings with a minor but substantial intelligence: it is evident that He has a

right to hold them responsible for whatever deeds they do within the scope of their capacity. Hence the reasonableness of rewards and punishments; hence the perfection of the Decalogue in making happiness or unhappiness depend upon an obedience to the precepts of the Supreme Intelligence on the part of those who have received life, light, benefits, and freedom of will as their characteristic as human beings. And in order to render the truths as comprehensive as they are necessary, our law presents them in a few brief sentences, which can be easily committed to memory, and be understood without any learned definitions, so that they may be accessible to the commonest intellect. Now this very character has imparted to our faith its permanence; a child could be and was taught whilst it dallied on its mother's lap; its memory could not recall the time when the main principles of our religion were strange dogmas to its awakening intellect; and as the man advanced in life, experience proved to him how happily the observance of his religion acted in every emergency of life, and how bitterly he had to suffer for every gross delinquency. What theory thus established, experience fully confirmed; and hence our religion became incorporated with our very being, and all the endeavours of men, nay our own frequent apostacy, could never take from us the word of the Lord which is in our mouth.

Now, other religions do indeed claim to be divine; but can they stand an examination by this test? We may freely say that they cannot, at least to our view they cannot; they are mostly lacking in consistency; built upon arbitrary dogmas; artificial in their struc-

ture, and have never been tested by the fire of affliction as ours has been. But in addition to this, all those systems which have any reasonable consistency were borrowed from Judaism; they are not one of them original; not one of them can do more than point to the Bible as to authority; and whilst this is so, we may justly say, that whatever of life such a religion possesses is derived either mediately or immediately from that Source of truth from which we draw the water of life.

We have thus established that it was a mighty and brilliant deed the Lord meant to accomplish in his descent on Sinai; and well fitting was the fearful display of royal power to solemnize the event. There were lightnings and earthquake, but no one was injured; there were the terrors all of the mighty Sovereign, but no evil befell any one of the vast throng that stood at the foot of the blazing mount; nay, the very earth was not riven by the awful convulsion which shook the hills when the Lord proceeded in his glory and might from Seïr, and came in his majesty from Paran, and the terrific fire blazed up to the heart of heaven, but not a bush was consumed, not a leaf was seared or burnt; and when the august display of the divine manifestation was over, the traces, the outward tokens of the Presence had disappeared likewise, and the grass was as green as ever, and at the foot of Horeb flowed the tranquil stream of the desert; but there remained indelible and everlasting the sound of the Voice which was heard by all, and our latest descendants will still exclaim as we do this day: "All the words which the Lord hath spoken will we do." The consuming fire has ceased to play

on the top of Sinai; but in our hearts burns the unquenchable flame; and "Hear, O Israel, the Lord is One," is a watchword which will never perish. Speak of marble monuments, and high-reaching pyramids; we have none, we need none; for our monuments are more durable, they stand much more proudly erect and eminent; and whilst the world lasts, let changes follow on changes, though all Israel were to perish by the sword and disappear from the earth, which with God's help will never be: still the words of truth spoken on the day of the assembly at Horeb cannot perish from the hearts of men; for they are, like the Author of the world, true and abiding forever.

Let us rejoice, then, that it pleased God to distinguish us so above all the nations, that He thus elevated us above all languages, that in having regard to the fallen state of man, to the dominion of sin over the sons of Adam, He selected us, the descendants of Abraham, to be the possessors of the truth, heralds of mercy and salvation to all the earth. Ay, we have suffered in this mission; our visage has been fearfully marred; we have borne shame and contumely; we have been made outcasts; we have been avoided as smitten by God and afflicted; princes have conspired against us, and nations have trodden us down as one treadeth the wine-press. But, brethren! we have survived all this, we have been sustained, and again preserved to reach this festive season. We hear yet the mutterings of the storm; the angry surges yet burst indignantly against the shores of the haven of our security; but our bark is safely anchored, it rests for security on the Rock of ages; and let then the storm again awake in its fury, let the billows rise again

over our head to whelm us in their wrath, we are shielded by the God who rules the storm, and to us will arise the sun of righteousness with healing on his wings, and we shall be led forth on green pastures for the sake of his Name, and we shall dwell in our land, secure and at peace, with none to make us afraid.

Let us rejoice, that in days of old the heavens were opened and an angelic food, more refreshing than even the manna, descended to refreshen our soul. Let us rejoice that the balm then dispensed is yet ours, and that whenever affliction, whenever sorrow comes over us, it is with us, in our heart, in our mouth, to console, to strengthen us. Let us then lay hold of the tree of life, which dispenses this heavenly food; let us study the law, practise its precepts with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our might; let us be faithful to it whilst life endures; and when comes the hour of death, when we must quit this beautiful world, and its joys, and its sorrows, let us hand it over to our children as the richest gift, the holiest legacy which man can be heir to, and let us admonish them to love the Lord and to serve Him, that it may be well with them and their descendants forever. Amen.

Sivan 4th.
May 25th. } 5609.

DISCOURSE XII.

PROVIDENCE IN HISTORY.

O EXALTED ONE! who dwellest in the highest heavens and with those who are of a contrite spirit, be with us this day and all the other days of our earthly pilgrimage, as a Shield of protection against the dangers which surround us, and as the Upholder of our fainting soul when we are wearied with the cares and trials of life. For what are we without Thee? what avail all our labours if not blessed by thy bounty? And well have we experienced this both in our national and individual existence, that he whom Thou blessedst is indeed blessed, and those are forsaken who pass through life without calling on Thee for aid. Let us therefore entreat Thee to magnify over us thy holy Name, that it may be glorified before the gentiles through our humble instrumentality, and that light and truth may spring up as the fruit of our toiling. And O! guard us against the annihilation which the ungodly are ever ready to prepare for us; frustrate their counsels and render to nought their machinations; so that it may be seen whose word shall stand,—whether theirs, which threatens the destruction of Israel, or Thine, by which Thou hast promised us perpetual existence. Do also shed over us thy healing power, and guard us when sickness invades the land, and suffer not the pestilence which

stalketh abroad in the noon of night to enter our dwellings; but ward off from us the sword of the destroyer, because we are thy children, though unworthy through our transgression, and remember unto us the covenant with our fathers, that Thou wouldst be our God forever. Amen.

BRETHREN!

The section of the law which we have read this morning commences as follows:

שלח לך אנשים ויתרו את ארץ כנען אשר אני נתן לבני ישראל איש אחד איש אחד למטה אבתיו תשלחו כל נשיא בהם: במד' יג' ב':

"Send thou men that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel; one man each of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send, every one who is a prince among them." Numbers xiii. 2.

In reading the history of the spying out of the land of Canaan, it has no doubt struck you, as it has done many who have lived before your time, as singular that the Lord should permit Moses to send out spies, when it must have been known beforehand that the men deputed to survey the land of Canaan would return with substantially a false, because exaggerated, report of the difficulties and dangers to be encountered in conquering and settling the fertile districts of Palestine, owing, as they subsequently alleged, to the natural strength of the country, the great height of the people in bodily stature, the artificial fortifications of the cities, and at length the extreme unhealthiness of the climate. But to argue simply

from the foreknowledge which God possesses because He is God, in quality of which all the deeds of his creatures are known to Him, and then to insist that the evil ought to have been prevented, because He has the power to order it otherwise—would be to demand at once a total abrogation of the freedom of will which characterizes the human family above all the animated beings which inhabit the earth. We however feel a conviction within ourselves that we have an uncontrolled power to choose between different acts presented to us; that we can prefer the following of one sentiment to the other, and that we can argue within ourselves whether we shall obey one impulse or the other. This then proves that we have a freedom of will, by which I mean, not that we can do whatever we please, but that we can omit or do any act for the time being within our power, without being withheld by any influence not inherent in our own selves. Now you will ask, "What becomes of God's foreknowledge, or prescience?" But we must consider one thing that, as we are not divine ourselves, our ideas being all limited to time and space as we discover them in our imperfect experience through life, it must be utterly impossible to comprehend completely the working of the mind of God, who is not bound and circumscribed as we are. We, when we know a thing must happen unless we use timely precautions to prevent the threatened result, are compelled to do so, because we have no other means to avert a permanent evil; our apprehensions become our masters, our necessity, and we must act under their impulse, or lose our advantage forever. In this matter, too, circumstances previously ascertained by experience, by

ourselves or others, are our guide, and we have nevertheless no control over the antecedent events which occurred up to the moment in which we find ourselves, and hence we are the creatures not of absolute uncontrolled will, but of a qualified independence, one, I mean, circumscribed by the means at our command, or the superior means at the command of others. We act in a limited sphere, and beyond this our power, influence or control must necessarily and absolutely cease. With the divine Mind, however, the case is totally different. He need not prevent any act from fear of the ultimate evil which can result therefrom, because the remedy is always within his reach. The opportune moment need not be seized by Him, because every moment is the same to Him, and all times are to his omnipotence alike propitious and seasonable. Nor need He wait for opportunity, for circumstance to exert his power and will, because his means are unlimited, and He can, as He does, shape the circumstances to answer his wise purposes. Besides this we cannot understand the Infinite, nor comprehend how his providence is exercised, and his wisdom exerted. To us there is or may seem an absolute incompatibility between his foreknowledge and our freedom of will; since if He knows that a thing is to happen, there is an insurmountable necessity that it must happen; for otherwise his knowledge would be at fault, or what is the same, it would cease to be knowledge. But we may take it for granted as taught by the Rabbins that "everything is the power of Heaven except the fear of Heaven;" the choice of doing good or evil is absolutely within man's control; wherefore the knowledge of God cannot act as an uncon-

trollable check on our inclination. To reconcile, however, the difficulty with his attribute of omniscience is a task beyond human power. Whilst here we are not alone limited in strength, but circumscribed in comprehension; but God is unlimited, uncircumscribed, wherefore we must of necessity be unable to comprehend fully his mind or his system of government. In consequence of this our search for knowledge should confine itself to things likely to be reached by our efforts; but we must leave out of its field of labour whatever absolutely touches the Infinite One in his far-reaching wisdom and power with which He governs all creation. Even to frame a conjecture, a probable solution of the difficulty, would be useless, inasmuch as we cannot arrive at an absolute certainty, and anything short of this would leave us precisely where we commenced, and the most we could arrive at would be to acknowledge that man cannot judge his Maker.

The study of Scripture and its best exponent history teach us one great principle, however; and this is, that notwithstanding man may distort the precepts of truth and wisdom he has received, he is restricted from effecting all the evil he may have designed; for he is held in check by the unseen Hand which wields the sceptre in the vast empire of the universe. Secondly, that however God knows all that has happened or will happen, man is not thereby prevented from exercising a limited freedom in all things subject to his control, and that the only proper restraining power is within the reach of those circumstances in which every man is placed, from the moment of his birth to the final close of earthly life.

It is thus not the knowledge of God but his providence which shapes the course of events; it is not necessity, unavoidable fate which controls the world, but a watchful government which takes cognizance of the most unimportant, the most minute event which occurs from one extreme of the world to the other: so that, as far as the government of the entire creation is concerned, it is wisdom and care, not knowledge of foregone conclusions, no unavoidable necessity upon which all events are based. As I said before, however, to reconcile the apparent difficulty is not in our power; it is enough for us that we have arrived at an absolutely ascertained truth, and our entire want of comprehending it diminishes its force no more, than other truths are incontrovertible from the mere fact that we cannot bring them in entire accordance with our reason, through our means and opportunities of arriving at perfect knowledge.

The Bible therefore, in giving us a history of occurrences which so greatly interest us, describes things as they actually were, not as we might suppose they ought to have been: still we can trace the finger of Providence in the whole chain of events, and we can point out to a certainty how its controlling influence was exercised to cause good to spring out of evil, how therefore an unmitigated calamity is not to be thought of, as far as the whole mass of men is concerned, though it is undoubted that individuals have had, or may still have to suffer many a wrong which we, from our point of view, may be inclined to pronounce undeserved, and for that matter, useless likewise. But as we do not know more than what falls under our observation, which, whatever our vanity may allege,

is extremely vague and limited, we cannot pronounce judgment with any degree of truth, except upon a very few cases, perhaps not a single one, if the whole truth could be ascertained. Look at the administration of justice, as you see it daily before you, and can you say that a verdict has been rendered so as to satisfy the judges themselves who pronounce it? But regard well the array of legal talent called forth to sift the truth to the bottom; the acumen of the judges; the care taken to examine the witnesses, all more or less cognizant of some fact or part of a circumstance attending the matter which is under investigation; and then reflect that after all this labour the result does not bring conviction home to you that justice has been done in the premises; and you will have enough to satisfy you, that human reason or experience is a very unsafe guide to ascertain the whole truth of things, if not guided by the inspiration of the highest Wisdom, from which all knowledge proceeds. Now it is this same Wisdom which we arraign when condemning as unworthy of a good Providence the whole history of the world; when we, blind, prejudiced, ignorant as we are, know not to decide understandingly on the very acts in which we ourselves bear a conspicuous part. But let us humbly sit down to investigate what the records of the past have taught us, let us inspect the peculiar position which each of us holds in consequence of circumstances which urged him forward: and we cannot help feeling convinced that nothing happens by chance, but weal or wo, sickness or health, affluence or poverty, are assigned with a due care to the welfare of all. The individual who is prosperous, healthy

or affluent may not deserve apparently or actually the mercy shown to him, more than those who suffer under the inflictions from which he is exempt; but nevertheless we may rest assured that the distribution of the divine favours, as all blessings we enjoy absolutely are, has been contrived in the wisest and best possible manner.

Another thing in this connexion which we must take cognizance of is, that miracles, or events beyond the usual course of the laws of nature, are of extremely rare recurrence, even in Scriptural history; and only when necessity demands does the Lord command his servant, the natural organization of things, to cease acting for a brief time, in order that He may ordain new laws to work his will, and to control the tide of passing events. In the majority of cases, however, the Most High seizes apparently on the most trifling event, and causes it to become the germ of mighty revolutions, or those turning-points which give to the history of man an entirely new complexion. Just look at the simple history of Joseph. He was the eleventh son of Jacob, born when the latter was far advanced in life, the child of his early and best beloved wife; and what was more natural than that he should love him above his other children? and to give him a garment somewhat more costly than to the others? And still it was this little circumstance which caused Israel and his sons to go down to Egypt, there to increase to become a mighty people, and to prepare themselves for the great mission for which Abraham and his descendants were destined. Let any one survey the ease and regularity with which one event was linked to the other, until the day that

our fathers stood around the foot of Horeb to receive the law, and it will appear most wonderful how truly the promise to Abraham was accomplished, and this through the favour which Jacob felt for Joseph. The manner was left to the free-will of man; we have no right to suppose that Joseph was necessarily to be sold for a slave, or that the brothers were guiltless in thus maltreating their brother who, though imprudent and blamable in bringing evil reports of them to their father, had not offended them beyond forgiveness. But, as this outrage had been once committed, it was turned to a wise account by Providence, and Jacob was drawn to Egypt by the ties of love, to see his long-lost child before his death.—That Joseph suffered for his wrong-doing was retribution; that Jacob was deprived of him for his at first unfounded preference was retribution; so also the remorse which the brothers felt was a punishment they richly merited; but for all this the Lord moulded the whole transaction to become the mighty lever for the accomplishment of a great and universal good.

Let us now return to our text. The Israelites had been redeemed a little more than one year from Egypt, and they had arrived at Paran in full march for the conquest of Palestine. But they were unused to war; not one of them that had ever seen the land whither they were journeying; they were unacquainted with the manners of the people, their military preparations, the soil, climate and productions of their future home. What was then more natural than that they should desire to send out some of their chiefs to survey Palestine carefully, and bring them back a correct account of all that could interest

them, and point out a good and practicable road, loaded as they were on their march, not alone with their women and children, but also with all their wealth, which, as yet in the East, consisted of herds and flocks. Moses no doubt consulted the Lord, who was always ready to speak to him when the welfare of the people required the Spirit to descend on the chosen people, and the consent was given, that natural means might be resorted to, to arrive at results perfectly legitimate and reasonable in their tendency. No good result was promised to arise therefrom; because man must do his own, and leave the remainder to Providence. Had the messengers, who, from their rank, may have been supposed to be beyond the suspicion of falsehood, executed simply their mission, and reported no more than what they had seen, and left the people to draw their own inferences from the facts and the specimens of the products of the country which were presented to them, all would have been well; for then the whole nation would have been eager to press forward to go and take possession of a lovely country, so full of all that could make life pass pleasantly. But most unaccountably they brought back a false report of what they had seen, and even the gigantic fruit they carried with them to the camp tended to confirm their assertion of the gigantic and irresistible size of the inhabitants, by which means the people, new as they yet were to the rule of their God, were made to fear, forgetting that He who had so variously shown them his power, could, if they only merited his protection, rescue them from all the dangers which threatened them in the contemplated conquest. But condemn not too

severely the backsliding of our fathers, or because that they preferred slavery to the apprehended extermination by the sword of a ruthless enemy. Recollect the thought of freedom was one yet new to most of them; the lash of the taskmaster had not been obliterated as yet from their lacerated limbs; the subjection to the refined race of Egypt had lasted for more than two centuries, and hence the feelings of freemen, who would sooner perish than be slaves, had not yet taken sufficient root in their heart to resist the inspirations of pusillanimous apprehensions of meeting a superior foe used to arms, confident in his strength, and fighting for his native soil and his acquired religion. As yet Egypt was to them a model nation, the highest in renown for power and intellectual development, from which too they had until lately received their laws, and the directions for their daily labour; in themselves they had as yet not learned to place sufficient confidence: Moses, with all his high talents, his virtues, his public services, and his disinterestedness, was only an object of attachment whilst he led them successfully forward, or restrained their unbridled passions either by new gifts or the strong arm of the civil magistrate. Hence arose that awful clamour in the camp of the Israelites the night after the spies had returned; the dreaded sword of the Canaanites became the pretext for revolt, and they already consulted about appointing a new chief who should lead them back to peaceful Egypt, preferring as they did inglorious servitude to a brilliant death on the field of strife. But this return to their former masters also betrayed their desire to throw off their newly adopted allegiance to

Heaven, and they seem to have preferred the freedom of the idolater's life to the circumspection and abstinence demanded by our laws. In vain was the persuasion of Joshua and Caleb to hush the senseless confusion; the people heard, but they became, as is usual in all similar occasions where the counsels of the wise are uniformly contemned, the objects of suspicion to the infuriated masses, so that their life was endangered, and they had well-nigh become martyrs to their holy zeal; when lo! the manifestation of the divine glory silenced the tumult which raged so loudly, and the hand of violence was stayed, and repentance sprang up almost instantly, but alas! too late, in the bosom of the erring people. It is not necessary to recite the history of the event of which we speak; I refer you to the Bible, where you will find it beautifully and concisely given. All we have to do is to draw a lesson from the facts recorded, and not to permit them to escape us without leaving a powerful impression on our mind, which may stand us in good stead throughout our individual and national life.

I stated that the people seemed ready, with but few exceptions, to return not alone to the flesh-pots, but also to the idols of Egypt. They had thus proved that they were not fit as yet to enter Palestine, where the presence of another false system of belief and practice might have perchance enticed them to forego their own religion, fenced in as it was by a multitude of restrictions of which heathens had no conception, and as in fact it occurred at a later period, that the Israelites did often adopt the customs of the Canaanites. The people had in truth the choice to obey God or not, if they were willing to subject themselves to

the punishments denounced against backsliding and sin. No force could, as we have said, be laid on their inclination. Still what use would have been all the display of miracles and mighty deeds, if this would have been the result, that the law, for the sake of which all had been done, were to have been cast aside as soon almost as it had been given? The adults, however, had proved themselves too slavishly-minded to be trustworthy, as an independent people.—Therefore, after the doom of extermination which had been first pronounced against them had been revoked in answer to the entreaty of Moses, it was decreed that all the men capable of bearing arms, that is, all over twenty years old, should gradually perish in the wilderness, and that a period of full forty years from their first going out of Egypt should elapse till their entrance into Palestine. This should effect two things: the first, that whilst all the men should perish, it should be so gradually, that the younger members should never lose the paternal care of their elders; and the second, that a new generation should thus spring up by degrees, all of them used to divine control, and reared under the immediate inspection of the great prophet and the elders of Israel, and receiving daily a full and satisfactory instruction in matters of religion; by which means the love for Egyptian supremacy and attachment to its false system of religion were to be entirely eradicated from the new generation, on which were to be built the hopes and name of Israel. There is not to be found in the whole history of the world such an entire reformation, produced in so comparatively brief a space as forty years, as was witnessed among the Israelites in the wilder-

ness; no trace of Egyptian supremacy was left in their mind, and whatever idolatry afterwards took root among the Hebrews, had its origin from Palestine or the adjacent countries, from Egypt they had been freed forever. We pass over this fact so lightly as though it were a small thing; but, if we reflect properly on it, we shall characterize it truly as one of the greatest mental phenomena ever witnessed on the earth. Thus did the providence of the Lord control the evil which was committed, and the defection which was contemplated was made to produce the most lasting good for us and all mankind; for thus were removed by degrees those who were unfitted for a refined religion and an enlightened mental freedom; whilst the chastisement they received left an impression on the mind of our race which has not been forgotten to this day. This also should animate us with the hope, with the conviction I should rather say, that a similar result will always be witnessed, let us be rebellious as we may. A few will ever remain faithful; on them we may freely base the hope of our permanence; and when the masses sin, which in God's mercy we trust will be averted, then the few will be spared, and from them will come forth that remnant of devoted ones, who will do no iniquity and will speak no deceit, but be a people of the Lord, to uphold his truth and his religion forever. Amen.

Sivan 25th. } 5609.
June 15th. }

DISCOURSE XIII.

TRUTH AND ERROR.

ALMIGHTY FATHER! we approach thy holy presence in humble submission to thy august will, to crave thy protection and thy blessing. All around us the mighty are falling, and they who are in health sink before the deadly shafts which are scattered from thy bent bow, and the cunning of the learned is turned to naught, and the skill of the physician is exhausted in vain. Well do we recognize in all we see the working of thy providence; for Thou willest to visit the sons of man, and who shall stay thy arm? and when Thou biddest death to go forth, who shall arrest his onward progress? And thus Thou teachest us that thine are the outgoings of life, and that to Thee alone belong the souls of the living and the dead. O then hear us, merciful God! and let not the destroyer approach our dwellings; for Thou art the Guardian of Israel, and thy eye slumbers not, nor does sleep descend on thy eyelids; and to Thee alone, O Father! do we ever fly for refuge in all times of trouble and affliction. And let this new visitation impress itself on our heart with the force of conviction, that those are well guarded whom Thou lovest, and that they who keep thy law have an abundance of peace. So shall we be drawn near unto Thee, to worship and to adore thy holy Name, and we shall be well shielded while on earth by thy mighty hand; and should we

be summoned hence to appear before thy judgment-seat, we shall receive thy approbation and the light of thy countenance, and be adjudged to dwell in thy presence forever. Do this for the sake of thy Name, which is profaned among the nations, and let them see that Thou art unchanged, and that thy word is true, and that Thou willest to bless thy people Israel, because Thou chosest them as thy heritage. Amen.

BRETHREN!

When the Israelites had nearly fulfilled the forty-years' pilgrimage to which they had been condemned for their rebellion, they at length approached the confines of the promised land, and were compelled by the inhospitable reception they met with from the king of the Emorites to defeat him in a battle which his aggression had provoked; and as the people with whom they had to contend were part of those whose land they were to possess as their own, they took formal possession of the country over which the kings of Heshbon and Bashan had hitherto ruled, as an integral portion of the future dominion of Israel. They had thus approached the country of Moäb, which they were forbidden to molest; and they remained peacefully encamped on the plains bordering on the River Jordan, quietly occupying the cities from which the Emorites had been driven out, whilst no doubt by far the largest portion remained in the tents which had been their sole habitation for the long period of forty years. Their overwhelming military strength, the ease with which they had overcome the warlike legions of Sihon and Og, ought to have convinced the king of Moäb that they had no evil intentions against

him, and that they would strictly avoid, as they had promised, committing any assault on his territory, unless provoked by unjust aggression on his part. But he did not rest satisfied with merely watching their movements; the fate of the Emorite kings inspired him with undue fear, and he moreover hated the people which had come up out of Egypt, and which now covered the face of the earth with their unwelcome encampment. To make a warlike attack on them by means of the sword only appeared to him the height of imprudence; they had overthrown the conquerors of his predecessors; he therefore resorted to the supposed magic power of the prophet, whose dwelling was in Mesopotamia, in the city of Pethor on the Euphrates, and entreated him to come to him at all hazards, to curse the Israelites, in order that, being under the influence of the malediction of the renowned necromancer, whose words were supposed to confer blessing or curse at his pleasure, he might be able to drive the detested and dreaded intruders far away from the borders of his kingdom. In this you have an early display of the hatred of the name of Israel, which the gentile world has ever shown; and the response of Bileam, which denoted the idea of an extermination of the people, proves that the desire was not a mere riddance of troublesome neighbours, but a destruction of those who were able to inspire with fear Balak, the king of Moäb. It is not my purpose to recount the history of the heathen chief and his ill-designing friend; for the Scriptures do this amply, and it is our province only to profit by the lesson thus conveyed. We stood at that moment in the infancy of our race; we had passed but one generation since

we had been bondmen to Pharaoh in Egypt, and we were then preparing to pass over the Jordan to inherit the goodly land which the Lord had sworn to our fathers. Our system was yet new even to ourselves; it had not yet been tried in the government of an organized commonwealth, where the clashing interests of various classes have to be adjusted in the balance of even-handed justice. Hitherto we had travelled and been sustained under the guidance of the most renowned of mankind; and hence it might have been supposed that no sooner would the watchful eye of the son of Amram be quenched in death, than the mighty fabric which he had helped to erect in so many years of toil, care, and sorrow, would fall into decay, and be not perceivable on the page of the world's history. To human knowledge all was doubt and darkness, as regards the future of Israel's law and state; idolatry prevailed all around; here was worshipped the brutal Molech; there the lordly Baäl; here one sacrificed to the obscene Peor, there to the voluptuous Ashtaroth; whilst elsewhere a multitude of divinities were adored, as in Egypt and in Greece, whilst in the land of the East the Zabeans worshipped the host of heaven, looking upon the servants of the Most High as those having substantial power, and able to succour the suffering son of man in the hour of his distress. How should the Israelites overcome all these difficulties? resist all these trials? Human wisdom said, "They must fall; the law will perish, and idolatry will not have long to dread those sturdy opponents who marched forward to their mission in the name of One sole God, whom they professed to adore as the Creator and Lord of the uni-

verse." But, said Divine Wisdom, "The people shall not fail in their destiny; the law shall live and conquer the world;" and thus have we sketched before us the two adverse principles which have contended for empire from the commencement of the rise of our people, and which warfare has not yet terminated, though multifarious changes have passed over the world and over our devoted race. But, think you that the instruments of attack have varied much since the days of Balak and Bileam? By no means; whatever opinion came on the stage of the world found the Israelites ready to contradict the assumption which it claimed as a divine truth; and it then armed its followers with the same envenomed hatred to drive us from our position, first by threats and persecution, and then by the blandishments of carnal pleasures or political favours; and still we have survived both dangers, and are here this day before our God, to hail Him as our Chief, as the Lord of our life and hopes. What does this prove? Simply that our nation is not to be destroyed, and that our law shall not perish.

Behold Balak and Bileam, standing on the top of the mount where the god of Moäb was worshipped. Far beneath is stretched out the camp of the Israelites, and in the bosom of both king and prophet burnt a violent desire to pronounce a fierce malediction over the seed of Abraham. Thrice had Bileam courted permission to denounce Israel; but thrice had the curse been turned into a blessing. And now the enraged Moäbite had bidden him to return to his people, because he could not gratify the ardent wishes of his malignant heart. Disappointed as Bileam had been in his expected honours, strongly as his tongue had

been bridled by a Power not to be resisted, he had not in the smallest degree relinquished the least of his ill-will towards those whom he had been sent for to denounce. But as direct evil was not permitted, he advised the blandishments of the daughters of Moäb to be resorted to, in order to withdraw those who had so long missed the pleasures of a settled home unto the path of sin. In this manner must we interpret the words of the 14th verse of the twenty-fourth chapter of Numbers, which are:

ועתה הנני הולך לעמי לכה איעצך אשר יעשה
העם הזה לעמך באחרית הימים : במד' כד' יד' :

"And now I am going to my people; come, I will counsel thee concerning that which this people shall do to thy people at the end of days."

The next chapter commences with the delinquency of the people whilst at Shittim, and in xxxi. 16th Moses distinctly referred the trespass of the people to Bileam, who had been slain by the invading army which had been sent to punish the Midianites for their treachery in aiding the Moäbites to mislead the Israelites to sin. The advice therefore which Bileam gave must have been in consonance with the event, and it was his malice which counselled and the ready compliance of Balak which accomplished the artful seduction of the thoughtless to fall into the snare of incest and idolatry, the latter being merely the consequence of the former, and both being contrived to call down upon the people the vengeance denounced against the forgetfulness of God and his commandments. But whatever the motive of the contrivers

of this plot may have been: the fact stands forth as a warning to us, that we must not listen to the voice of voluptuous pleasure in the path we are pursuing; there lurks danger to our peace under every flower, there is death hidden in every fruit which our faith forbids us to pluck; and whoever presumptuously supposes that he may escape the unseen snare, that he may without injury to his religion toy gaily with the joys of life which irreligion and vice present to him, will surely fall a victim, like the twenty-four thousand who were first induced to worship Peor, and then fell prematurely stricken down in a day by the hot blast of the pestilence which raged in the camps of Israel. Let no one imagine that he is so strongly fortified in faith and the practice of good works, that he cannot be moved. Temptation may destroy the strongest resolution, may overcome the most pious education; and only when the sin which he imagined himself able to avoid has ensnared him, will the transgressor discover that it is not in vain that we entreat the Lord in our prayers not to let us be led into temptation; and indeed, when we are so reckless as to expose ourselves uselessly where incentives to sin prevail, we have already more than half committed the trespass, and we are guilty to the full measure of iniquity, although we may vainly charge our fall not to our own wickedness but to the favourable opportunity. And above all should Israelites take care how they mingle with the world. Many things permitted to others are to us prohibited. We are circumscribed in the number of our days of labour, in the food which we may take to sustain life, and in the connexions which we may form in our family

relations, simply because of the ideas of worship which we must entertain in consequence of our maintaining the belief in the blessed unity of the great Creator. We may fancy indeed that we can at will preserve the latter belief in our heart; we may imagine that we may eat the food which the strangers eat, and that we may work on the day consecrated to God as the strangers do; we may imagine that we can embrace the daughters of those who know not the hope and faith of Israel as the dearest friends through life; and that nevertheless we may remain spiritually united to the God of Abraham. But, brethren! the spirit cannot remain true whilst the body is dissevered from the congregation of Israel; there can be no harmony between us and our Father, whilst we are strangers in his house, unwilling to obey his commandments. Some one will say, that he can worship in truth the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, whilst his wife attends the meeting-places of her own sect. But will not his earthly affection interfere with his adoration of Heaven? will he not feel himself drawn silently but surely to the errors which he at first condemns, then pities, and at last admires? Some indeed may stand firm; perhaps the very constant intercourse with what they feel to be errors may disgust them daily more with the ideas entertained by the partners of their joys and sorrows; but how will this operate on their domestic happiness? where will be that unity which ought to reign in the family-circle? that confidence and that unwavering attachment which have only one sentiment, which constitute man and wife but one soul in two bodies? Alas! such a perfect union cannot exist,

where the sentiments of religion are diverse; and it is but too likely that the one whose belief is that of the minority of mankind will gradually yield, for the sake of domestic quiet, his manners and mode of life, and at last perhaps the very profession of opinion which is so highly prized in words by many a transgressor. No! there can be no truth in our profession of Judaism whilst our intimate associations oppose a barrier to our perfect union with God, whilst our affections draw us to earth, though our sentiments are centred in heaven. But even admit that a man should remain faithful though his wife be not of Israel: how will it be with the innocent offspring of such an ill-assorted union? who is to teach them to fear the Lord Eternal One alone? to call solely on his Name? and to walk in all his ordinances and his statutes which He commanded to our fathers? Is it nothing that those who are to come after us, must be precluded by our acts from worshipping the Almighty after the manner of Israel? is it nothing that our children and our children's children to all future generations are to worship at the stranger's shrine, having no inheritance in David nor a portion in Jessé's son? O that every Jew would pause before he takes so fatal a step; that he would reflect on the awful responsibility before he voluntarily makes a vow by which, if not he, his children at least will be apostates from Israel's God! And how can a daughter of our people listen to the flattering words of the stranger to her kindred and lineage? how can she believe him true in his burning protestation of the love he feels for her, and that his only wish is to make her happy, when she must know that the day she is hailed as mother, is

the commencement of a long series of agonizing years? because she will be compelled to see her child estranged from the religion which she still does love in the chambers of heart, though outwardly she has forsaken her people for the home of one who abhors her faith; how can she do otherwise than clasp with remorse and sorrow the helpless babe to her agonized bosom, repenting only when too late, that it cannot be sealed with the token of the covenant, and numbered among the elect of the Lord?

The subject which I have merely sketched could be easily filled up to a greater extent; I could paint in strong colours the agony and grief which such transgressors will at length experience at the end of their days; but what needs it? Does not the voice of admonition breathe in every conscience? does not every one feel that my words are true? that there is no safety for Israel except in isolation—as the prophet Bileam himself said: "Behold it is a people that dwelleth alone, and is not reckoned among the nations?" (Numb. xxiii. 9.) But imagine not that our religion teaches us to be unsocial in our habits, and unkind in our demeanour to those whose ideas do not accord with our own. Not so; we were bidden to accept in our community as members of our people the third generation of Egyptians and Edumites; we were commanded to love the stranger as ourselves, to receive the fugitive bondmen even, who might escape from servitude into our commonwealth; the gleanings of the fields, olive-gardens, and vineyards, were to be left to the destitute of all nations resident among us; and many other similar injunctions were given us respecting non-Israelites. But I only meant

to impress on you, that in intimate social intercourse respect must be had to our religious persuasion and the practice which this demands from us, so that our religion may not be deprived of its followers, either in us or others, through any instrumentality of our own. Let us not flatter ourselves in this connexion that our indifference to our faith will always continue, and that we shall never care about the ultimate result of our misconduct. For in the first place such a reason itself is an insufficient one, and cannot by any possibility excuse one single act not permitted by the strict letter of the law; and secondly, even if wrong could be defended upon the foolish plea that we cared nothing about it, it must still be recollected that a time may come when our views will change, and we shall regard then as very heinous what we now practise with so much carelessness and self-complacency. It does not follow that, because this day I violate religion with indifference, the same must be the case all the days of my life. How can I then consistently with sound reason place a bar upon my returning to the convictions which I now reject? There is many a sin which stands isolated, and demands not a repetition of itself as a necessary consequence. But there are others which grow in their demands, and where they are once committed have of necessity to be repeated again, because there is no easy way of escaping from their entanglements. One of these is the intermarriage with gentiles; for when the alliance is once formed, it cannot be readily severed, and the longer it exists, the more thoroughly will the bond which unites us to our faith be weakened, and a return to righteousness under the law will become more and

more impracticable. It was therefore that the dereliction of the Israelites in the time of Bileam was so severely punished, and that so strong a seal of the divine disapprobation was set upon the attachment to idols superinduced by a love for gentile women. Believe me that our religion would not have so energetically interdicted all intercourse of an intimate kind with gentiles, as to prohibit their "food and their wine, and their daughters," if fidelity to our faith and people could have existed alongside of these acts. But as it is evident that we must fall beneath the assaults of sensual indulgences partaken of in common with others, and that we must be cut off from the communion with Israel by intermarriages with those who are strangers to our blood: it is but reasonable that in revealing himself to us as the Eternal, and Almighty, and sole God, our heavenly Father should, as He had an undoubted right to do, impose on us such restrictions as would enable us to profess before all the world our attachment to his law, and thus guard against our becoming lost amidst the other children of men.

Do not flatter yourselves that the nations of the present day love our religion more than did the Moäbites in the time of Moses. There is no evidence of it; on the contrary, to judge from the eagerness with which converts are hunted for, the various schemes concocted to make us swerve from the path of our duty, and the constant endeavour to promulgate among us doctrines contrary to our belief: we should judge that there is no abatement whatever in the obstinacy with which the world rejects the truth as revealed to us from Sinai. The gentile woman and

the gentile man will make themselves a merit out of withdrawing an Israelite, be this a wife or a husband, from the synagogue, and inducing him to join the mosque, or church, or chapel; and least of all could you expect that they should permit one to be educated in your faith, in whom they have an equal right as yourselves.—There may be exceptions; but the rule will be that a gentile parent will insist upon, and succeed in educating the children of a mixed marriage in the peculiar tenets in which he has been reared. Public opinion, worldly interests, the personal standing of both parents and children point in this direction; and are you so stupid, so infatuated as to suppose that your children, with a bad example before them, will be better adherents to your God than you yourselves, who had all the advantages of domestic education, and the strongest family-ties, and the motives of affection? If you love your faith, show it by wedding, if you marry at all, only those who will strengthen you in your attachment to ancestral customs, and do not undervalue your own people as too inferior to you in standing to become a husband or wife to you, as the case may be. Perhaps some proud worldlings may indeed think that Israelites are not elevated enough to furnish them with suitable alliances; hence they rove beyond the pale of our communion to seek for those whose standing, wealth, and birth are equal to their own. What I state is truly more in sorrow than in anger; it was the sin of Solomon, the king of Israel; it was the sin of the Israelites of Spain during the days of their prosperity, and it has become again the transgression of Jews of modern times. But Solomon was punished; through

his leaning to idols to please his wives, the kingdom of Israel was rent in twain, and two feeble states, after long and constant intestine warfare, fell a prey to the conquering kings of Assyria and Babylon. The sinning of the Spanish Israelites produced a mongrel race more inimical to us than those whose parentage was purely gentile, and they became by degrees the most cruel persecutors of their ancient lineage; and I fear that those of modern days will be a thorn in our eyes and a dagger in our sides, and that they will endeavour to revenge on the professing Israelites the stigma which adheres to them in their fancy as descendants from a Jewish stock. Perhaps we may laugh to scorn such impotent enmity; but still they will work mischief by their presence among us, and being thus the means of leading others astray, and spreading far and wide the poison of indifference to our religion; for it is but too likely that these half-Jews will intermarry with children of professing Israelites, and then by being unconverted to our faith, induce others more and more to become estranged from God's house.

Let it be the study of parents, therefore, to warn early their children against the danger of their affections leading them away from God. Let them instil in those whom the Lord has intrusted to them to watch over and to teach them, strong principles of love for the ancient law of Israel; to love their own people, the household of Jacob, with a more devoted attachment than they bestow on others; and let them never denounce as unworthy of their regard, and as unfit for associates, those who with them are descended from the stock of Abraham. Let them also love to

make them acquainted with Jewish society, and teach them not to imagine that to be a Jew is to be inferior to the rest of the world. We are a noble race; inferior to none in intellect and energy of character; that many are yet degraded is owing to the pressure of centuries; and let this be removed, and there is no elevation which our mind cannot reach. Do this, teach your children humility, teach them love for God, instruct them in his law; bring Israelites to your house; repair yourselves where your brothers meet: and it is highly probable that your offspring will follow your footsteps, and be sedulous in remaining true to your faith and people, and you will not have cause to mourn for your descendants as strangers to God, but behold in them all scions of righteousness, servants of the Most High, in whom He finds delight. Amen.

Tamuz 16th. } 5609.
July 16th. }

DISCOURSE XIV.

THE PLAGUE.*

O Thou Hearer of prayers, answer us in thy mercy, for unto Thee, our Father! does all flesh fly for refuge. Let mankind pass on in their stubbornness, unwilling to acknowledge thy power: they will, nev-

* Delivered on the occasion of the public day of humiliation proclaimed by the President, on the 3d of August, 5609.

ertheless, turn and seek Thee, when they feel thy potent wrath, with none to help them; for then they see that their own arm is weak, and that their idols are vain, and they come, therefore, to crave of Thee, whom they will not recognize in their prosperity, that the evil may be stayed and the storm averted.

It is therefore, Almighty God! that this day has been devoted by the ruler of this great people, in whose midst we dwell, as one of humiliation before Thee; because Thou hast permitted the destroyer to go abroad, coming with terror and armed with resistless force to slay in the city and in the field, upon the waves of the ocean and in the distant desert, overleaping boundaries which the fear of man has set unto him, and defying alike the art of the coward and the daring of the brave; and wherever he has appeared, the slain are behind, the dying before him, and there is wailing in the hamlet and weeping in the densely crowded streets of the busy towns where commerce has taken up her dwelling; and the conquering armies and the flying hosts alike stoop before the unseen enemy that strikes down the aged and the young, the matron and the virgin.

Who does not see Thee, O God, in this visitation? Who feels not that this evil is from Thee? Who, that has been taught thy ways, does not understand that thus Thou wouldst demonstrate thy power, and chasten the wickedness of the heart of man? For full well do we know that prosperity renders us proud, and uninterrupted peace but lifts up our heart, and causes it to say, "My own strength of hand has acquired me all this wealth." But, when we see our prosperity suddenly checked, and our homes made

desolate, as it were, in a moment, we then turn aside from our worldliness and ask, "Whence hast this evil come upon us?" Behold us, therefore, here this day, O most merciful Father! to acknowledge, in thy presence, that we are sinful, and have done evil before Thee, and that for the sins of our own committing, and those of others, Thou hast again visited this land, and sent sorrow and mourning into the dwellings of its inhabitants. We have also, in accordance with the instruction which we have received in thy revelation, repaired hither to call on thy holy Name, to have compassion on the land, and to avert thy anger from us, and to restore us all to wonted health and vigour. For behold, all feel the weight of thy indignation, and high and low have experienced the bitterness of the cup of confusion which so many have been made to drink; and all, therefore, whose hearts have been touched by thy power, who have been led to fear Thee through the might of thy outstretched arm, now invoke thy grace to avert, henceforward, the wrath which has been poured out, and that Thou mayest again be favourable to the land.

Hear us, then, O Almighty Father! hear us! and accept our prayer as an agreeable savour in thy presence; and let us and all mankind be made to feel that Thou alone art able to wound and to heal, and that there is none that can save from thy hand. Yea, teach us thus to fear Thee, and to remain firm and true, though Thou shouldst deem affliction best for us,—yea, were it even that Thou shouldst decree to remove us to another life, cutting short in a moment our brief span of years on the earth. Hear us, O Father! and remove the evil which now afflicts us,

and permit us to continue longer on the earth, that we may have time to repair the wrong we have done, and cut us not off in our iniquity. But grant that the solemn warning which we have received may aid us to overcome our evil propensities, and induce us to seek light and instruction from thy word, and to devote unto Thee all our strength,—to serve and adore Thee with a perfect heart and a willing soul. So shall we be acceptable before Thee, and know that Thou art our God, the Father of all spirits, who is good and true in his word and promises, and merciful to all, because He delighteth in mercy. Amen.

Brethren!

On an occasion like the present, when our assembling at the house of God is not in obedience to the usual demands of our religion, but in consequence of the invitation of the chief magistrate of the country, which only happens on the recurrence of some national calamity, or a national cause of thanksgiving, it is well to reflect on the motive which prompted the constituted chief of the nation to step aside from his usual functions, which concern the temporal government of the country, and to recommend a religious observance, which, in the ordinary routine of events, is not within his province. Indeed, it is not often that such a thing takes place in a commonwealth like this, where the civil government is wisely precluded from an interference in the religious affairs of the people, over which they have conferred no power on their rulers. Consequently it must be something momentous which can authorize and sanction such a step, and which can obtain so general an ac-

quiescence from nearly all shades of opinions for a proclamation of a general day of prayer, as we witness this moment. Perhaps there never was a period in the history of the country, when a request emanating from the Executive of the Union met with so general a response. And why? Because *all* feel that there is ample cause for a whole people to pray, with a united voice, for mercy and protection, from the only Source whence all that is good proceeds, even the great God of Israel, the Creator and Protector of the universe; and the President of the United States has done well to state that, "at a season when the providence of God has manifested itself in the visitation of a fearful pestilence, which is spreading its ravages throughout the land, it is fitting that a people whose reliance has ever been in His protection should humble themselves before His throne, and, while acknowledging past transgressions, ask a continuance of the Divine mercy." Yes; God has spoken in tones of rebuke to the earth; and from afar came over the sea the muttering of his wrath; and nation after nation looked with dread on the progress of the destroyer, fearing that its turn would come next, and that the evil would, sooner or later, step over into its boundaries; and one by one fell under the sword: and now, notwithstanding the distance at which we are placed from the birthplace of the cholera, it has a third time overleaped the breadth of the Atlantic Ocean, and has spread with more than its former swiftness over the whole surface of the land. We have found it true, as the Psalmist says, that

משמים השמעת דין ארץ יראה ושקטה : תהל' עו' י':

"From heaven hast Thou (God) caused us to bear judgment; the earth is affrighted, and is stilled." Psalm lxxvi. 10.

From afar it was heard, as though a voice spoke from heaven, somewhat more than thirty years ago, that a new pestilence—new at least to the present generation, and but obscurely spoken of in the books of science—had been born in the country fertilized by the magnificent Ganges. It was told us in fearful whisperings, how men were stricken down as in a moment, and how conquering armies quailed and fell, in a single night, before the irresistible arm of the unseen destroyer. For a time it rankled at that great distance, in a land well calculated, from its soil and climate, to produce debility and to nourish pestilential vapours. Perhaps no one then thought that it would stride over the ices of the north, and climb the perpendicular walls of snow-capped mountains. But if men thought after this fashion, they were grievously deceived; for gradually it progressed from its native swamps, until it had overspread all Asia, the known parts of Africa, and all Europe; and soon after establishing itself on the western confines of the latter portion of the world, it followed hitherward the track of the voyagers, and spread, with desolating violence, in a very brief space of time, through many a degree of latitude, till the whole land groaned under the terrible visitation. Seventeen years it is this very week since we met here, in this house, in obedience to the proclamation of the Governor of this State, to ask for heavenly aid during the first visit of the cholera; the plague was stayed soon after, and we were enabled to rejoice that of those who then worshipped in this

place, not one had fallen before the destroyer; and when, two years later, the epidemic appeared in a milder form, we again had cause for thankfulness in a renewed exemption from the plague. From that period until lately we had indulged in the vain hope that henceforward we should be spared from the ravages of a disease which had already slain its millions on the Ganges, the Nile, the Euphrates, the Wolga, and the Mississippi. But no; again the alarm was sounded that the enemy approached anew; and, as vain as had been the efforts of governments to exclude the scourge from their countries—idle as had been the exertions of the most skilful physicians and naturalists to grapple with it and to conquer it at its first irruption—so vain and futile were the renewed efforts and exertions which we lately witnessed, and the stoutest hearts now quail when the news of its presence in a city is noised abroad; and well may we say, in the words of our text, that "when God causeth his sentence of judgment to be heard, the earth is affrighted and is hushed;" for man feels now his utter helplessness, and how incapable he is to save himself by his own endeavours. This, therefore, is the cause why the President of the Union has requested all the inhabitants of the land—who are all alike under the sentence of condemnation—"to meet this day in their places of worship, to implore the Almighty, in His own good time, to stay the destroying hand which is now lifted up against us." And is it not right that we should do so? To whom shall we fly for protection, if not to Him who is emphatically the One who slayeth and bringeth to life, and from whose hand no one can save us? The occasion of our assembling

to-day is, accordingly, one of the greatest moment; and it is necessary that we ponder well on the same, and not suffer it to escape us without endeavouring to let it make a lasting impression on our minds, and to influence our actions likewise, in the days that are coming.

Let us consider. Man is so very apt, in the moment of his prosperity and peace, to consider himself as something superior, that often calamities are to him the source of the greatest blessings, inasmuch as they cause him to reflect on the vanity and transitoriness of sublunary possessions, and to fix his eye on that imperishable world which opens to us a bright future through the midst of the gloom of the portals of death. Ay, death is a gloomy prospect; the bravest of heart, the most devout and resigned to his Maker's will, may well shudder at the reflection that, before many years, the earth will claim her own in his frame, and dust will again mingle with the dust, and the light of the eyes will be blotted out, and the brain, the seat of so many thoughts and aspirations, will, deprived of the principle which set it in motion, mingle with the clod of the valley, undistinguishable from other dust which surrounds it; and the tongue, which now speaks forth great thoughts and daring ideas, will be stilled, and feel no more. And yet, look at the vast majority of mankind, and you see them labour for mere worldly things, as though they could toil on forever; they heap up riches, as though their end would never come; they hunt for pleasure, as though the changing year would always find them in the beauty of youth and the strength of manhood. Is not this the course of man? But look at him again, and you

will see that he toiled in vain; the success which first smiled on him only deceived him to rush upon an utter destruction; and him that confided in his wealth you may often see stripped of what he so greatly coveted and so closely guarded; or you will behold the proud beauty speedily changed by disease into an object of loathing, or see him who trusted in his manly vigour crippled in limb and helplessly deformed. Is not this a picture of life? Yet, even let nothing but success, and plenty, and strength, and joy, accompany the son of man uninterruptedly from his birth till the highest old age, still what will then be the end? Will not the silver cord be loosened? will not the bowl be broken at the fountain? Put off the day of evil as long as you will, it must come: it approaches hourly, momentarily; and each word spoken, each syllable uttered, each breath drawn, we have performed a step which brings us nearer and nearer to the grave. No grace, no virtue, no wealth, no vigour, no beauty, can snatch us from the open gulf which either looms up in the certain distance or yawns at our feet, ready to swallow us up in its insatiable jaws. All that are born are born to die, all that have life are doomed to the grave; and earth, and air, and water, and fire, are pledged to carry out the Creator's will; and thus the end of life is death, and all that is bright on earth is sure to be dimmed by the hand which gathers in the rich harvest which always ripens for the grave.

Were it, therefore, that all men would thus reflect, and look upon earth as a place of preparation for another world, constant prosperity would not be a bar to their happiness hereafter. But tell a man, in the day of his success, to think of the future, and it is

probable that he will deride you as a gloomy fanatic, who, because the world goes hard with him, because he has no joys himself, would only be too glad to render every one as miserable as he is. "Enjoy the day," "Sufficient for the day are the evils thereof," or some other similar saying, will perhaps be the only answer to your well-meant admonition, and you will have cause for grief to see the unthinking hurrying along on their destructive path, notwithstanding that your words bore the lessons of wisdom. But see the worldling again, when the sun of his prosperity is clouded, or when disease invades his domicil, which he was fain to imagine inaccessible to the calamities of other men, and you may perhaps find him changed in his estimation of his own importance, and he may perhaps then listen to the breathings of consolation which are found in the words of religion. Yes, when men are brought to tremble at the majesty of God—yes, when nations have learned that prosperity is not of their own making, will they bow in submission to Him through whose bounty they live, through whose goodness their power is established. It is then that they come to search into their conduct, to see whether or not they have not deserved the misery under which they suffer: whereas a constant stream of success would only have rendered them obdurate, and inspired them with the arrogant assurance that their conduct, their entire course, had been consonant with the laws of mercy and justice.

When a calamity, therefore, befalls us, we should not arraign the Divine Providence for injustice,—not accuse the Merciful One of caprice, of unmindfulness of our claims to immunity; but we should at once set

about examining into our own conduct, and seek for the source of the evil in what we have done or omitted. If a man discovers that gradually afflictions overtake him, he should immediately look over carefully in what he has failed, see whether or not his heart has become proud and rebellious, whether he is yet as entire with his God as he was wont to be. If he then discerns the sin of pride lurking within, if he beholds the demon of covetousness preying on his vitals, if he detects the spirit of unbelief springing up in his soul, or if he is made conscious that he has not at any time served his God with the true, entire devotion which the Scriptures demand of him: he should unhesitatingly condemn himself, and accept the punishment as a wise chastisement sent to recall him from earth to heaven. He should accordingly stifle the arrogance of pride, though it be but in an incipient state, for only then is it conquerable, before yet the contempt of our species, and the inordinate exaltation of self have degenerated into a passion. He should overcome by all possible efforts the undue desire for worldly possessions; he should apply himself with humble prayer to the study of the word of God, so as to conquer the tendency to skepticism which he has discovered; and lastly, he should make the practice of religion a daily exercise, and contemplate at every hour of the day, at any employment in which he may be engaged, the goodness and mercy of God, how He bestows so many benefits on his creatures, blessing the undeserving even, and not withholding all good from every generation, whether they be virtuous or forgetful of His laws. And should, after all, the calamity not be removed, let him not omit persevering in

his altered righteous course; for he may be sure that the evil is calculated for his mental elevation, inasmuch as a renewed prosperity might withdraw him again from the path of repentance on which he has just commenced to enter. But we know from experience that to the righteous a light always springs from darkness, and that in bearing the evils which beset them in a manner becoming those who love their God, and confide in Him in resigned meekness, they set a beautiful example to the world of the superior efficacy of a pursuit of religion, and they confer a benefit on all by proving that man needs but little to enable him to live in cheerful content, and that even amidst bodily ailments he can glorify his Maker, provided only that he places his trust in Him who never deceives, and whose spirit always is with the afflicted, to aid them in their struggle with the adversities of life. It is thus that what we call evil is calculated to rivet closer the union which connects the creature with the Creator, and is thus fitted to stimulate him to persevere in doing what he is taught to be right, or to return to it, in case he should have acted contrary to its dictates. The individual, moreover, can easily scan his whole conduct, if he has independence enough to judge himself without favour, and if he is sufficiently alive to the dictates of duty which revealed religion asks of him; wherefore every admonition he receives, whether it be through words of advice or unforeseen affliction, can be properly received as an incentive to an amendment of conduct; in consequence of which he can be at once held amenable if he refuses to listen, and he may therefore not complain of injustice if the chastening hand is

not withdrawn whilst he continues in his obdurate state.

Nations also often sin nationally; that is to say, they are guilty of collective wrongs, for which the whole body politic becomes liable to divine visitation. Now the Almighty has appointed three prominent agents to chastise whole communities, and they have ever proved the scourge of erring man, afflicting perhaps not all, but an indefinite number of the inhabitants of one or more countries. I speak of war, famine, and pestilence, which slay their thousands without destroying, except under rare circumstances, entire communities. But this emphatically proves that a Providence regulates the evils, especially those which proceed on their mission without human intervention. Were it that the pestilence, for instance, should sweep off the population of an entire district, it might be ascribed to some unknown change in the atmosphere, to some organic modification which is hostile to human life. But all the researches of philosophers have hitherto utterly failed to prove, that such a change or modification of the atmospheric air which we breathe is the cause of the different pestilences which have ravaged the earth at various times; and they have at length, though reluctantly, been compelled to acknowledge the mysterious agency of a divine visitation. The sky is often clear, without a spot on the beautiful blue vault which is spread like a tent over us; the sun shines with a brilliant clearness; a pleasant breeze is wafted over the earth and sea; a teeming mantle of green covers with a luxuriant growth the field and meadow;—and yet each breath drawn in such a sky, in such a season, is

fraught with death. Nevertheless, all do not die, exposed though they be to the same influences, breathing as they do the same death-loaded atmosphere; and often the robust and healthy sink rapidly before the destroyer, whilst the decrepit and the diseased survive, and perform the last sad rites to those who vainly imagined that they would outlive the others. What does all this teach, but that the pestilence obeys the laws of its Sender, that in the midst of its ravages not one is stricken down on whom is inscribed the sign of life? I would not thereby convey the idea that it is vain to observe rules of prudence in epidemic visitations as useless. Far from it; we must use all the precautions and remedies which experience has recommended as useful; but I would only show that, with all human care and foresight, which we justly employ as agents placed within our reach by Providence, we at length are dependent on Him only for the success of all remedial agents; inasmuch as so many fall who are well fortified, whilst those are spared who are weak and exposed.

In short, the whole course of history proves that no one can account for the various inflictions of evil which occasionally visit the earth. All cares cannot ward off the plague, if God bids it to go forth. No one can arrest the famine, if the decree from above sends blight and disease on the fruits of man's labour. No counsels of the wise can altogether prevent the calamities of war, even now, in this enlightened age, when so great a progress has been made in the construction of deadly engines, which renders the contest of nations so much more bloody now than it was ever before, though immense slaughters have signalized

the ages of darkness no less than the present. All human foresight is in vain to ward off the instruments of vengeance which the Lord holds in his hands; and let, therefore, no nation, no matter how mighty and enlightened, pass heedlessly by, when either of the great national calamities befall it or its neighbours. Victory itself is but a slight recompense for the calamities of war; a rich return for a superabundant harvest at home cannot compensate the feeling heart for the sufferings which scarcity of food occasions in other lands; and the exemption from bodily ailment is no source of exultation, when we see the grave closing hour after hour upon those we value and hold dear.

When Moses now, in addressing the Israelites as a nation, and in this capacity only was the law governing their commonwealth imparted to them, independently of those ordinances which concern the individual only, wished to set before them the practical fruits of obedience, he promised them exemption from war, famine, and unusual mortality. Concerning war, he said: "If you will walk in my statutes, then will I give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid." (Levit. xxvi. 6.) Concerning plenty, he said: "And I will give your rains in their season, and the earth shall yield her increase, and the tree of the field shall give its fruit. And the threshing season shall reach with you the vintage, and the vintage shall last until seed-time; and you shall eat your bread to satisfaction, and you shall dwell securely in your land." (Ibid. 4, 5.) Likewise in Deut. xi. 14, is the same idea repeated: "And I will give the rain of your land in its season,

the first and the latter rain, and thou shalt gather in thy corn, thy wine, and thy oil." Besides these, there are several other passages, which it is needless to quote at present, as what has been given is sufficient for our purpose. And lastly, concerning sickness, he says: "If thou wilt hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do what is just in his eyes, and listen to his commandments, and observe all his statutes, every sickness which I have inflicted on Egypt I will not inflict on thee; for I am the Lord, thy physician." (Exod. xv. 26.) So also, "I will fulfil the number of thy days" (Ibid. xxiii. 26), which refers also to the verse immediately preceding, which is in these words: "If ye serve the Lord your God, then will he bless thy bread and thy water, and I will remove sickness from the midst of thee." For the present we must be satisfied with these few extracts, which indicate in what manner Moses applied the blessings for obedience to the nation. He spoke to them collectively, not individually; wherefore he set before them national blessings, such as peace, plenty, and health; for spiritual excellencies in a future state cannot affect nations collectively, since they are only imaginable in a bodily existence, as we are on this earth of ours. So, on the other side, the condemnation of the soul of the sinner cannot have any terror for entire communities, for the same reason; wherefore Moses threatened war, famine, and pestilence to affect the Israelites nationally, in case they, as a nation, would rebel against the Lord, whilst he handed over the individual malefactor to the vengeance of the outraged laws of the commonwealth. I refer you to chapter xxvi. of Leviticus, and xxviii. and xxxii. of

Deuteronomy, for the effects of a national backsliding. I have detained you already so much to-day, that I will omit the passages which specially bear on our subject, satisfied as I am that you will readily supply the deficiencies by a simple reference to your Bibles. Understand, however, that though spiritual punishments and rewards are not laid down in so many words, they are nevertheless plainly alluded to in various passages, especially in Levit. xxvi. 11, 12, for the rewards, and verse 30 for the punishments.

But enough for our present purpose that we have established by Scriptural authority that the recurrence of every national calamity ought to induce us to seek for the cause in some wrong in which the nation which is especially afflicted, or the whole mass of mankind, may be collectively concerned. We may also assert that a general system of oppression, fraud, licentiousness, or profanity, is a national or general wrong, sufficiently great to bring down one of the calamities which afflict the world. It were easy enough to prove, by actual reference to the history of the present age, that it is not a whit better than its predecessors in oppression and wrong inflicted by the stronger on the weaker party. There are occasionally glimpses of sunshine, which would lead one to suppose that a better era was approaching: when, alas! the illusion is soon and painfully dissipated by the recurrence of some terrible outburst of violence and bloodshed, by a wholesale slaughter of tens of thousands, in the streets, perhaps, of some quiet city, and by other acts of cruel barbarity, which have disfigured the history of the last few months. I will concede that refinement has progressed, that the arts

and sciences have advanced to a height formerly unknown; but these are national blessings, not national virtues, and ought to have excited the gratitude of mankind toward their Benefactor; whereas in fact they have presumed on their gifts to question not rarely the providence of Him by whose bounty they were blessed. Do you therefore wonder that the earth has been visited with dreadful disasters?—that blow is struck on blow?—and that one visitation closely follows on the other? Happy indeed will it therefore be, if the present calamity induces the masses to think, and to cause them to lay aside strife, injustice, and oppression towards each other, and a rebellious ingratitude to God. In this all men may be guilty or meritorious, as the case may be; and herein all can participate, notwithstanding their difference in persuasion, or conviction on theoretical religion. All civilized men acknowledge but the self-same code of morals, and by that must they be judged, and by this same standard must they collectively and individually probe themselves. We see how for the last fifty years one evil has followed on the other; we also see that but little progress has been made in the moral improvement of man. On the contrary, we are compelled to acknowledge that in simplicity and truth there has been a great and woful falling off from a high standard. Is it then not time that each man search in his own heart for any latent evil which he may cherish there? Nations are but collections of individuals; nations must repent, therefore, through their individuals; wherefore each one is called upon to endeavour to do all his duty, and to induce others to do the same.

If this is demanded of all, even those who are not of Israel, how much more is it requisite for us to return to the good old standard of religious conformity, to the simplicity of that faith which characterized our predecessors. Much as we may value the progress of free and liberal opinions, we must also deplore the decay of that high-souled devotion which caused the oppressed Hebrew of former years to find in his faith a home which his country denied him, a hope which nothing could quench, and an abiding trust which nothing could shake. But now,—what are we? Worldlings, seekers after pleasure and gain, anxious for a name on earth, though our inheritance in God's house be thereby forfeited. And is this our gratitude? Alas! that truth compels us to acknowledge this guilt. And who knows but that through our misdeeds in part is this evil brought upon the world? Wherefore it is time that we arouse ourselves, in common with the other inhabitants of the country. Let them follow their convictions; let them go each in the light they have received; but let us go in the name of the living God, the everlasting King, who gave us His law to observe as an ever-enduring covenant. But let all, not excepting ourselves, take heed that they do not add the sin of national hypocrisy to their other transgressions; and let them not assemble this day merely to show themselves penitent, without feeling sincerely that they have transgressed. The mere observance of any day is nothing, but it is the spirit alone which sanctifies the act; and so we are taught in Joel ii. 12, 13: "And now, also saith the Lord, Return unto me with *all your heart*, and with fasting, and weeping, and mourning, and rend your hearts, and not your gar-

ments, and return unto the Lord your God; for He is gracious and merciful, long-suffering and great in kindness, and repentant of the evil." Let us act thus, and be resolved henceforward to obey the commands of the Lord, and there may be hope that He will arrest the destroyer, and be gracious to us and all the land. Amen.

Ab 15th. } 5609.
Aug. 3d. }

DISCOURSE XV.

OUR RELATION TO GOD.

O God of mercy! by thy goodness we have been spared amidst the ravages of the pestilence, and we stand at the conclusion of another year, and the changing season proclaims that another summer is gone; and thy faithful children again prepare themselves to declare anew their devotion to thy rule, and they will hail Thee once more as the King of all the earth. O Father! listen to the joyful shout which will soon be heard throughout all Israel, to the united voice which will ascend to thy throne; hear thy people when they acknowledge thy omnipotence, and hearken when they call on Thee to remember them unto life and happiness, and write them in the book of salvation, for the sake of thy holy Name, and forgive and pardon their iniquities, because the abundance of mercy is with Thee. Amen.

BRETHREN!

Standing as we do this day, so to say, at the brink of the departing year, it is proper that we should dwell, for a brief space, with earnest words and thoughts on the contemplation which each change of the seasons awakes in the heart of man, if he thinks at all on the events which pass unceasingly under his observation. There are indeed many who travel through life apparently without any serious thought; to them it is all in all that they pursue their business successfully; that they enjoy the good things of life; that their wives and children make a good appearance before man; but when their impulses have been gratified at such a result, they are careless about the past, thoughtless of the future; they know from the experience of others that men are mortal: yet in their own persons they seem to forget that there is an end to the prosperity they enjoy and to the good things which they consume, a limit to the fine appointments, furniture and equipages which distinguish their families from the common masses who have to dispense with the luxuries which they possess in abundance. Or there are others who waste their time in idle dissipation, who love to grovel in the dust, to have coarse appetites and brutal desires, who deform the human face divine by deeds of debauchery, and bloat it by drunkenness. These too rush through their brief space of years, as though the earth were their home, as though they had no occasion for higher aspirations, for nobler acts than mere carnal gratification: yet they too will be brought to their end, and the earth will be heaped over their head, and on their body will feed the grass and the flowers of spring,

and they will moulder into dust and ashes as their fathers before them have done. But let us hope that we, who worship in this house of God, have learned more correctly the end of our appointment, and that we cling not to earthly things as the exclusive objects of our regard and care, and that we duly appreciate the uncertainty of life which admonishes us momentarily to prepare for the change of time for eternity which is impending over all men. Yea, let season glide by season, let year follow on year, and let each find us in joy and happiness, in health and vigour, let our house stand unshaken, and our friends be all around us for another and yet another revolution of the moon, and then say, is it all safe? is all secure against the overthrow of the structure of clay in which our soul dwells? You may say, These are trite remarks, they are constantly addressed to us by all sorts of moral writers, by preachers of all persuasions. You are right, these remarks are not new with any one of the present generation; men in ages long past, perhaps from the very beginning of the presence of man in society, have said this, and exhorted their hearers to reflect on their mortality. But whilst human passions are the same, whilst mankind will hurry blindly and wilfully upon destruction, it becomes those who have been appointed watchmen among their fellows to sound the alarm, and to repeat again and again in the ears of their hearers, "Remember that you are mortal! remember that you are accountable." Ay, men will hear the words, and pass on as though they heard them not; they will close their ears to the advice which religion proffers them, and live forgetful of their spiritual welfare, despite

of the repeated admonition. All is to them a thrice-told tale, something over which they may make themselves merry, or fall asleep, as the humour may counsel them. But what of that? has the moralist therefore nothing to do? is he to remain silent because his should-be hearers are deaf? Imagine before you a city asleep in the dead of night, and let the wakeful watchman perceive a fire enkindled by the hand of the incendiary, in the midst of a crowded neighbourhood, where slumber thousands of unconscious dreamers, where are buried in repose the tender wife and the helpless children. What should the watchman do? Yea, sound the alarm; he should cry "Fire, fire!" and if he fails to rouse the sleepers at once, he should redouble his cry till some one hears him, and then he should repair to the tocsin to toll in loud and admonishing sounds to rouse all to exertion, not alone those who are in danger, but all others, even the remotest, for fear of the conflagration's spreading, and that all may be ready to stop the devouring element from endangering the portion that is yet free from the flames. No one will blame the guardian of the night for having created a useless alarm, for having waked up too many sleepers, although the danger was actually magnified by his fears, although the flames were subdued by the exertion of a few, with a limited number of buckets of water. You willingly forgive him, should he repeat a similar offence; for you would correctly say, Far better is it that we be aroused before the danger is imminent, than that our nightly guardian should permit us to sleep at a moment when danger actually threatens. Even so, brethren, is the case with your moral guar-

dians, whom you have set over you to tell you "what is of the night," to let you know how it is with your moral horizon, whether there be symptoms of fire or of any other danger in the farthest distance, that they may arouse you betimes, that they may sound the tocsin, so that you may be able to escape.

As a watchman therefore among you, I stand here to warn you of the wrath that is coming, in case you lead the life of ungodliness, and follow the evil desires of your heart to forsake the law of the Lord your God which He commanded to your fathers. It is no idle threat which your religion utters against the workers of iniquity; for amply has she been avenged on us especially, not to mention other nations of the earth, because we would not listen to her voice. We contemned her counsels, we derided her words; and she fled to heaven to appeal for redress against our forgetfulness of our duty, and fearfully has her cause been avenged, and we are this day the standing evidence how fearfully those suffer who neglect their God in pursuing earthly toils and carnal pleasures. Our fathers were fully as refined as we are; Jerusalem was full of beauty and elegance, than which nothing is more excellent in this our boasted age of refinement; literature flourished to a degree which we have not yet reached since then; agriculture stood on a height from which it is sadly fallen; our sons were brave, our cities were strong, and commerce and navigation poured their rich treasures into the havens of the sea which belonged to our land. No one believed that the oppressor and enemy would ever stand in thy gates, O Jerusalem! and still he came with his legions, as numerous as the locusts that

devour the herbage of the field, and he uprooted thy walls, he cast down thy temple, he overthrew thy altars, he burnt thy palaces with fire, and those of thy children whom the sword, the famine and the pestilence had spared, he led forth into captivity, and scattered them over all the face of the earth, as the farmer casts his seed over the furrows of the field which he has ploughed for a future harvest. And this was done—not out of revenge—not out of malevolence—not out of hatred from the Divine Master to us his people—his people though we had rebelled—but that we might be recalled to ourselves in the hour of tribulation, that we might be snatched from the path of corruption, that our blessed religion might be saved to the world, while she was in danger of perishing in our prosperity through the great backsliding which was witnessed whilst we lived at peace and united in our own land. We had been made the bearers of God's covenant; and when we showed that we preferred the ways of the world to the path of righteousness, the bridle of distress was put in our mouths, and the unseen hand of God guided us back to the path from which we had strayed. For Israel had entered into a covenant with the Lord to be his witnesses on earth, which task was to be accomplished by their being mindful of his instruction; prosperity, national and individual, should be the reward of a willingness to obey; and on the contrary the dark waters of sorrow should open as a deep chasm at their feet in case they should desire to become like the nations of the earth, to worship stocks and stones, and to pray to a god who cannot save. Literally a yawning gulf should bar our way, should warn us to retrace our steps to the safe haven

of the divine mercy: and so it happened. For no sooner were we carried away to Babylon, than idolatry was forever banished from the heart of Israelites; no sooner had our temple fallen a prey to the flames, lit up by the fierce legionaries of the proud, conquering Roman, who overcame us because of the discord that reigned in our councils, and because of the civil strife that raged in the streets of Jerusalem, than we swore anew fealty to our faith, and declared by the lurid glow that overwhelmed our sanctuary, that now our mission had fairly commenced, and that we would carry our laws, our language, our uncontaminated lineage whithersoever the winds of heaven might drive our storm-tossed bark. Have we kept our vow? have we remained faithful to our mission? Let history speak, let it defend Providence against the false accusation of those who love not our religion, when they say that we are cast off from grace and forsaken; for never could we have survived the tribulations, the more than fiery trials which we encountered in our wanderings, had God not been with us לולי עמנו אל.—God was indeed with us, and whenever we were afflicted He stood by our side to watch that not too great were our trials, that not too heavily rested on us the burden of sorrow. We suffered; but we felt that it was well for us that we were afflicted, so that we might turn aside from the world, and search in the law of our God; we felt that at each recurrence of tribulation we were again drawn nearer into the embrace of the benevolent Father, from whom prosperity had at times well-nigh severed us, and induced us to slacken our vigilance, and to adopt the manners of the nations of the earth, as

though our constant care were no longer needed in the enlargement which had been granted to us. And was this clinging to our faith in vain? was it an idle thing for which we have striven, and wandered, and suffered, and bled? No, no! let nations boast of their victories, of their march of improvement, of their beautiful capitals, of their numerous armies; but give us our religion, our ruined Jerusalem, our wasted temple, the recollection of our ancient fame; for they are enough to make us glory in our descent, and to give us pleasure in being assured that indeed the Lord, and He alone, is our God. No lapse of centuries can make any change in this inheritance; no distance of climate can rob a son of Israel of the least of his birthright; but whenever, wherever, and whatever he is, he remains a child of the covenant, a participator in the promised reward and redemption at the hand of his Maker.

With these views let us examine the words of Moses in his last address to the people, just on the eve of his departure from earthly life:

ולא אתכם לבדכם אנכי כרת את הברית הזאת
ואת האלה הזאת: כי את אשר ישנו פה עמנו עמד
היום לפני ה׳ אלהינו ואת אשר איננו פה עמנו היום:
דבר׳ כט׳ יג׳ יד׳:

"And not with you alone do I make this covenant, and this oath of confirmation; but with him who is standing with us here this day before the Lord our God, and with him who is not with us here this day." Deut. xxix. 13, 14.

You will recollect that Moses spoke altogether of the future; since with him the days of sublunary life

were soon to terminate. All the blessings he proposed, all the curses which he pronounced were to be realized immediately or long after his death. He fixed no limit as to the time when the blessings were to cease, and spoke of no termination for the liability to the curses. Just as the religion was experienced in his own age, did he transmit it to future ages, with all its obligations and duties, and their attendant rewards and punishments. There was no hesitation or ambiguity in his words; no subterfuges, no limitations, no exceptions; he spoke for all classes, for all times and all circumstances; and if anything were necessary to prove the divine legation of Moses, it could be found in the universality and ubiquity of the application of his precepts to the circumstances of the people for whom primarily his legislation was intended. The result too of his predictions, as regards the consequence of compliance or non-compliance, has been precisely what he declared they should be, whilst he yet dwelt among us. All has been accomplished according to the literal meaning of his words, and there has been no occasion for us to seek defending them by adapting a sense to them which only cunning interpreters might discover. So there is also in our text no double meaning, and it simply says, that Moses, in the covenant or agreement with the people, which he then made by the command of the Lord, did not alone embrace those men, women, children, and adopted strangers who were at that time present and assenting either loudly or silently to the terms proposed, but with all those similarly situated who might be born at a later, nay the latest, period. Again you can discover no limitation as to time and place;

no exemption from the duty or benefit thence arising, whatever that may be, from any consequence, to result from the covenant then and there made between the Lord, the God of heaven, and the Israelites, his chosen witnesses on earth. What does this say? is it that a time will come under the Mosaic dispensation that the observance of the ceremonies is to cease? or that all which the Lord has commanded is to remain unchanged till such a period, grant even that it shall arrive, when God himself will pronounce us dispensed therefrom? Understand, there is a material difference between a precept dead of itself by lapse of time or change of circumstance, and one repealed by the express authority of the one or the collective body who first enacted it: in the one case any person may pronounce on its nullity, in the other no one but the enacting authority. But if we examine our question by the light which revelation, history and common sense throw on it, we cannot discover a single repealing clause, either direct or by implication, respecting any law of Moses, except it be those precepts referring directly to especial circumstances, the repetition of which becomes impossible after a certain period, for instance, the mode of slaying the Passover-lamb as practised in Egypt, which was practicable only in that manner at the particular time and place in question, namely the night of the Exodus, or which are bound to certain localities or periods, and therefore of no effect if the people are differently circumstanced from the particular position as contemplated in their code. In all such cases we may say that the laws bear within themselves their own repeal or limitation; and having fulfilled the object of their insti-

tution, they become from that moment of no farther binding force, till a new relation springs up, when their applicability becomes of new significance. To the latter class I would refer the laws relating to the priesthood and the sacrifices. They were intimately bound up with the Israelites' possessing Palestine and their having a temple as the chosen residence of God. With the destruction of the house of God and the expulsion of the people from Palestine ceased, therefore, all the regulations connected with the scheme of sacrifice and the active duties of the priests and Levites; because the manner of acting in these respects as pointed out in the code had ceased to exist. But the sanctity of the sons of Aaron, and their selection to bless the people as commanded, have not terminated; because these matters were not connected with the circumstances just named. So soon however as the temple is again restored, and the people are again settled in their ancient boundaries, there appears not a single warrant in the law, as it is now in our possession, to authorize any one to say that sacrifices and priesthood have been abolished. It may be possible that God designates a new state of things at the time of the promised restoration; but the plain letter of prophecy does not teach it; and we have no means other than this to arrive at a knowledge of what the Lord intends to decree. Sacrifices however will be restored, to judge from this standard, and again shall the priests officiate in the courts consecrated to our God, and incense will again ascend on high as a sweet savour to the Lord of life.

What I mean to exhibit by the views I have just presented is this, that all the precepts of our religion

are as binding now as ever they were, since no authority has been conferred on us to pronounce on their nullity. When you hear therefore that the progress of enlightenment has absolved you from the observances of any commandment; when any one tells you that there is a difference in holiness between a moral enactment and a religious ordinance: reject the assertion in both instances as unsound and unscriptural; I will not say unrabbinical, for the evident letter of the Bible speaks of the permanence of all the ordinances, and it is only by implication that we assume at all that any repeal can take place, upon the supposition that He who thought proper to bid us act as it is written, may at some future period think fit to absolve us from the farther observance of ceremonies; but there is no proof from the prophets that this will ever be. At all events we know as yet of no authoritative repeal; wherefore inference cannot permit us to sit in judgment upon the books of Moses, and to accept and reject, just as it may suit our fancy and *our* ideas of what is or is not consonant with the progress of the age and the march of intellect. For let us see what does Moses enforce in the twenty-ninth chapter of Deuteronomy, from which our text is a part? Simply the observance of all that is written in the book of the law; as he says in verse 20: "The secret things belong to the Lord our God; but the revealed ones are for us and our children forever, to observe all the words of this law." I know not where words more clear and emphatic can be found in the whole range of written language; hence it arises that all those who entered into the covenant to be God's people, that is, the Israelites and strangers of Moses's

time and all their successors, are bound to act up to the revealed words of Scripture and to observe faithfully whatever these may teach,—be this as regards moral laws and rules affecting civil government, or those relating merely to our observance of religious ordinances; since all are comprised in the revealed words which are written in the book of the Law.

And now, brothers and sisters in Israel! you stand again this day before the Lord your God; not indeed in that universal assembly which crowded around the blessed son of Amram when with unclouded eye, and unblanched cheek, and undiminished bodily vigour, and undimmed giant-intellect he spoke of his own speedy dissolution, and exhorted them for the last time to obedience; but in that re-echoing gathering, as I may term it, where you are collected in the minor sanctuary, because you are children of the covenant, to renew that allegiance to your God, which your fathers pledged themselves to on the day of the assembly at Horeb. It is not a small thing your fathers promised; they looked into the dark future and saw thousands of generations rising one by one from their loins, and encompassing the whole with a prophetic view they gave a promise of obedience for themselves and all their sons in all futurity. And you, noble sons of a noble race, have come hither to give your personal adhesion to the compact, justifying the confidence of your ancestors in having given their united assurance, fulfilling the terms of the covenant in this age so many generations removed from that of Moses. But are you willing to accept the oath? Do you understand the terms on which the Lord will accept you? Then know that no half-

compliance, no timid shrinking from duty will satisfy Him; you must be wholly the Lord's, bound to Him with an allegiance which knows of no swerving, with a confidence which is shaken by no vicissitude, uprooted by no adversity. Can you come with such a will to the house of God? can you offer up such a sacrifice of your hearts on his altar? can you of a surety call on Him to examine your soul and find no divided empire therein? Then come hither on the day of the creation of the world, and when the cornet is blown, proclaim the Lord your King in your innermost heart; for then He will dwell in you, and be your Strength and Support, and He will accept as the richest incense the prayers which you offer, the sighs of repentance which you breathe. But if you find that you have a thought which allures you away from God; if selfish desire holds you captive in the chain of carnal pleasures; if you love gain more than the divine favour: then root out the leaven before the day of judgment comes, and resolve henceforward to be perfect with your God. Renew your heart, arm it with faith, strengthen it with resignation: and you will readily obey the voice of religion which speaks to you out of the Scripture; you will follow implicitly the divine teaching, because then you will confide in the truth of the Source whence it sprung. And should good betide you, you will accept it as a favour bestowed by the Most Merciful, not because you deserved it, but only because He wills to bless you; and should evil overcome you, you will at once look up to Him in whose hands are the issues of life, and submit to his decree, though the weight of misfortune be not removed from you, assured that whatever He does

is well done. But let us hope that God in his goodness may decree unto us all our portions unto life and happiness, and that He may vouchsafe to renew for us the coming year with blessing and peace; that He may plant in us brotherly love and mental forbearance, and grant us enlightenment in his law and the means to overcome the inclination to evil which is within us; so that we may live in harmony and good-will, and be acceptable in his presence. Amen.

Elul 27th. } 5609.
Sept. 14th. }

DISCOURSE XVI.

REFLECTIONS ON ATONEMENT.

Conscious of our guiltiness, we approach Thee, O our God and King! to throw ourselves on thy mercy, that Thou wouldst deign to blot out our iniquity and to remove our transgressions from before thy presence. Day by day hast Thou waited for our return with penitence; but we have stood afar, and would not listen to thy admonition; and we are even this hour laden with sin; and even while we crave thy pardon, do our deeds testify against us. Yet hear us, O Holy One! and let our troubles not be esteemed light before Thee, and extend to us thy helping hand, to lift us up from the depths into which we have sunk through the evil which rests like a weighty load upon us. And do Thou hear, Father! when we invoke thy aid, though we ourselves be unworthy of favour,

in behalf of all thy erring children, and grant that Thou mayest lead them back unto thy mansions by gentle admonition and by paternal chastisement; but pour not out over them the fury of thy anger; for who can stand before Thee when thy wrath rebukes the world?—and why should the strangers to thy worship say that Thou hast cast off the children of thy servants, whom Thou chosest from all nations to be thine? O pardon, therefore, and forgive! and when our iniquities testify against us, remember thy everlasting mercies which far exceed our guiltiness, and remove our sins, making them vanish like the misty cloud; because pardon is with Thee, and Thou willest that the guilty one should not die, but live to earn thy favour by repentance and an amended course of life. Do this, because of thy covenant with our fathers, and for the sake of thy glorious and mighty Name, which dwells with us. Amen.

BRETHREN!

It is recommended by our teachers that those who have the word of God with them should address the people on the subject of repentance on the Sabbath between the New Year and the Fast of the Atonement. In compliance, therefore, with this recommendation, which has almost become a law in Israel, I mean to lay before you this day some considerations having reference to the subject of repentance. Often as it has been discussed, in every age and every clime, —presented, as it has been, in a thousand different lights and under various diverging doctrines, some of which, if admitted, would subvert the foundation of Judaism,—yes, much as has been said of the pos-

sibility of a man's making his peace with Heaven, there remains yet much to be urged; and while mankind continue to forget the laws of God, it is but proper that they should be reminded that they ought to retrieve their moral delinquency; simply because God gave them the power and the means to accomplish this task, and that a refusal to repent is an addition to their already heavy burden of iniquity. Whatever may be said of other religions about the beauty of their doctrines, and the assuaging power they have to calm the disturbed mind and to lift it up from the slough of despondence and despair: Judaism knows no superior in these essential elements of mental purification. It is true that it enjoins duties and obligations, the neglect or transgression of which will draw down on the offender the punishment denounced in the Bible against sinners; but this does not prove that it must therefore fail to bring peace to the inward man in a less degree than is accomplished by a system which enjoins no duties, which causes all salvation to depend on faith in a doctrine which no one has yet correctly expounded, and which is capable of no rational and satisfactory exposition. There may be many persons who can take up such a religion and profess to believe in its entire truth and efficacy, who fancy that, in this blind yielding to an ill-defined dogma, they have found peace and the assurance of a forgiveness for all their sins, and a certainty that nothing obstructs their onward march to celestial felicity, the moment that they have acquired this unnatural belief, and incorporated it with their being. But let us not blind ourselves by the appeals which such as these may address to us, that we should cast off our own re-

ligion of faith *and* deeds, or think that it is not holier, truer, more founded in reason and Scripture a thousand-fold than is anything which they can advance. All religious systems demand an acknowledgment of a Supreme Power, to whom the creatures are responsible for their conduct. Responsibility, however, presupposes duty; for without that, we can incur no indebtedness. Now, if we have duties to perform, it means that without accomplishing them we have incurred guilt, no matter how strong and earnest our faith or belief may be in the one who is the author of the system of duties. Nay, the very presupposition of justification by faith makes *faith itself a duty*, paramount though it be represented to all others; for if it be absolutely necessary to salvation that we believe in a certain series of doctrines, the absence of this belief will insure our condemnation. If we thus sift the meaning of the idea of a justification by other means than a submission to the dictates of active religion, we shall discover that the mode of obedience to duty is only changed, not, however, that the existence and necessity thereof are removed. Consequently the differences between Judaism and other creeds is but a consideration as to the nature and amount of duties to be observed, since all are agreed in fact, if not in words, that they are requisite; and having established this much it is only necessary to ascertain from the most reliable sources what is demanded of us in the premises.

This consideration brings us at once to the records of Scripture; because all the religions of civilized men take this as a foundation, and all endeavour to prove themselves correct by arguments drawn from

this source. But what is the evident sense of the Bible? Is it that mere faith is demanded?—or are duties of various kinds therein specified? Strange, however, as it may appear to those who know not the truth, there is nevertheless not a single expression in all the books of Moses which can even be tortured to mean that there exists any method whatever to obtain the divine favour, except obedience to the revealed words of God before we have yet transgressed them, or a return to obedience with repentance, and a thorough regret, in case we have neglected the teaching of the Lord. To oppose this with any show of argument, a flat assertion is often made that deeds are of no importance; since all men fall far short of a full measure of obedience, wherefore all are under condemnation in not accomplishing all which the law demands; whence they infer farther, that there is yet another power capable of assuming our guilt, if we place confidence, faith, or trust in his ability to relieve us from the wrath of our heavenly Father. Many loud assertions are made in this connexion, that Judaism is a religion of forms, since it cannot assure its votaries a full pardon by anything it teaches, and that, on the contrary, the faith of our opponents is full of such assurances, and therefore better calculated to assuage the spirit in sickness and death. But the whole of this is an error. *First*, deeds are of importance, or else God would not have enjoined them; He is not a capricious tyrant, to ask of us what He afterwards will not value or estimate. Consequently we must say that the performance of every duty will have its beneficial results, and be of advantage to the soul of the one who practises it. *Secondly*, in admitting

that all men fall far short of a full measure of obedience, we only acknowledge what the Bible already teaches, that the heart of man is prone to evil. Nevertheless, we see that God declared, in Gen. viii. 21, that He would not thenceforth curse the earth, as He had then done, for the sake of man; wherefore we are authorized to assert that, notwithstanding man's dereliction, he will not be condemned, provided only that he has faithfully and honestly observed and done all in the line of his duty that was accessible to him, according to his means and opportunities; and that even an occasional sin, or a direct contradiction of God's laws, will be leniently regarded, provided it proceed not from a rebellious spirit, and is not repeated till it becomes a habit. And *thirdly*, if it be at all true, or even possible that there is a power, other than our God, to assume our guilt, or, in other words, to shield us from the debt of accountability to the Deity, it follows that this power must have an independent existence, able to do something to the Creator which He could not do himself, or, in other words, a second and separate god; for in no other sense could there be an assumption of guilt, which the Lord could not or would not pardon without such an intervention. Now, we ask, how does this contrast with the fundamental truth, not of Judaism alone, but of the entire Bible? It is evidently in direct contradiction; for what is the first assertion in Genesis? "In the beginning God created." Only one creative Being is represented as producing the whole,—only one Will as presiding over the entire organization of matter and mind which is found in all creation. The same idea is reiterated in the Dec-

alogue, where it is said that we shall observe the Sabbath as a sign that we acknowledge the creation of all things to have taken place in a period of definite time by the Lord God,—the same One who spoke to Abraham, "I am the Lord, who brought thee out from Ur in Chaldea,"—the same One who blessed Isaac on Mount Moriah, and appeared to Jacob in the vision at Beth-El. Again was the belief in one universal, all-pervading principle repeated, when Moses thus spoke to assembled Israel: "Hear, O Israel, the Eternal our God is the one Eternal," meaning, is alone, solely, and absolutely without addition or division, the One who is all-powerful, and exists forever. I know well enough that those who deny Israel's hope of salvation have carried meanings into these passages which they have not in their literal acceptation, and which would never have been imagined to exist, had it not been that new doctrines had been broached, which cunning men sought to force upon the attention of our people, by making it appear that they were in some sort of consonance, or at least not in direct conflict with our Scriptures. How little they have succeeded in this, let our being here this day before the Lord prove to the satisfaction of the most skeptical. What has not been done by outward force to aid the scriptural proofs by the potentates of the earth! What cruelties, what briberies, what persecutions have not been resorted to, to make the wrong appear the better reason! But what has it availed all? We have rejected the idea, foreign to our faith, that the Lord is incapable of pardoning, that we must seek for another who does not exist, to screen us from the fiery arrows of Him who slays and brings to life

again, in whose right hand there is salvation, and with whom dwells the eternal light; and we have assembled here in his presence, to ask of Him that forgiveness, that pardon, that indulgence which He has promised to those who repent of their errors, and pray of Him that atonement which will render the spirit acceptable in his mansions.

In what, now, does Judaism fail of comforting the soul? in giving an assurance of a renewed acceptability? In nothing, let us answer, which any other religion can legitimately impart; for since all assume that man is sinful, and that sin can only be removed by divine favour, no matter how obtained, and as there can be no evidence in the mind of any rational being that his guilt has been removed, unless each one assumes to himself an especial revelation, to which absurd length indeed many have proceeded: it follows that we have in our religion just as many elements of favour with God as any other system can possibly produce to a mind not overclouded by fanaticism, or blinded by the grossest ignorance. For we too hold that man is sinful, and that he requires the divine guidance to teach him the way of truth; but we believe that this requisite knowledge has been imparted to him in the books of revelation; wherefore he has the means of uniting himself to God by acts of obedience, daily and hourly performed in the pursuit of his duty, nay, in the prosecution of his business, for every act of common honesty and fair-dealing—every deed of benevolence and charity—every kind word spoken to the afflicted and sorrowing—every friendly salutation which causes pleasure to a fellow-man—all, all are acts in the fulfilment of

duty, and by all and by each a man earns a portion of divine favour. For it is not the mighty acts of heroism, of a public display of an ardent faith and devotion, by which the great leaders whom the Lord raises up from time to time as the lights to their fellow-men are distinguished, which are asked of the masses who are animated with a living soul; because they are not called upon so to serve the Lord; their calling is at the domestic fireside, in the open field, in the workshop of the artisan, the busy mart of commerce, or the other various employments with which the sons of man are busied during their stay on earth; and if they in each are mindful of the duty which has been prescribed to them, they will earn the favour of God, and be decreed to everlasting life; because in all their walk they trusted in Him, though no human tribunal would adjudge them to have accomplished great things, which can be felt beyond the humble roof of their domicil; for to our God, the high and the low are alike, and He alone can properly measure, weigh, and appreciate every little deed, every fleeting thought, every passing word. And should a man have been false to his mission—if he have been deceitful in his worship—rebellious in misfortune—proud in prosperity—arrogant under success, or faint-hearted under sorrows—let him have strayed ever so far from the line of duty as indicated in our religion: he is bidden not to despair of mercy, but to return from his evil way, ask of the Most High to forgive his transgressions, and wait patiently, cheerfully, to see the issue of things, in the full assurance that that only will happen which is the most conducive to his eternal welfare. Does any system of belief do more? can it

actually secure a man against the recompense of his crimes at the hands of the Judge of all? who is there bold enough to assert that all sin, all transgression can be atoned for, can be completely wiped out by a faith in a redeemer? and unless it can go this whole length, of the complete eradication of every stain of sin, caused even by murder, incest, and idolatry, there is no use in this newly-invented addition to the scheme of repentance, because it leaves the sinner precisely where he stands under the Mosaic dispensation. And suppose there be no exceptions, what horrid prospects do you open to a civilized community! Men of a fanatical spirit will, as they have actually done in history, commit the grossest outrages, under a full faith of pardon through a blood that, as they allege, was shed for them; and they will thus coolly glory in crimes which make the blood curdle, and cause the hair to stand on an end. This is no exaggeration; this is no air-drawn picture, but the result of sober inquiry; the wonder only is that transgressions are not more frequent, when you find so easy a method to disburden you from them.

But our religion teaches us no such a plenary extinguishment of moral indebtedness; no such an easy riddance of responsibility for whatever we may have done. We are accountable, though repentant, and no regret can of right wipe out any consequence of our wrong-doing, which we, by our own acts, can repair. Therefore teach our wise men: "For sins between God and man the Day of Atonement will make an atonement; but for sins between one man and his neighbour, the Day of Atonement will not make an atonement, till he have satisfied his neighbour." Be-

cause, how can a man enter the house of God with lips burning with fervid devotion, with many words of praise and thanksgiving on his tongue, while in his house he harbours the plundered goods of the poor and helpless, whilst the orphan cries to Heaven for the vineyard unlawfully withheld, or the field in the possession of the powerful oppressor? In every consideration does Judaism present itself as the effort of the highest reason, as the most enlightened progress; and it assures the returning sinner of pardon and favour in no greater degree than it does the righteous who has never sinned. But when we have made a true faith in God's mercy our own, when we are fully impressed with the conviction that all his ways are just: we shall do good because it pleases the Creator, and if we have sinned, we shall return from evil, because He counsels us to do so. In neither case, however, can we come to bargain with Him for so much reward for so much obedience, or for so much pardon for so sincere a repentance. No, brothers in Israel! in this manner would all our piety, would all our penance only be demanding a return, when perhaps, there is nothing due to us; when, perhaps, we are barely entitled to escape from some condign punishment which we have incurred under the strict rule of justice. "But what mental satisfaction does our religion then confer?" I hear you ask. I will tell you: It teaches us that all is from the Lord; that nothing, ever so great, nothing ever so little occurs, but it has proceeded from his ordaining; that prosperity is not scattered abroad at random, without design or foresight, but with the strictest eye to the general good, although we be not able to distinguish

between the undeserving and the meritorious, and not capable of seeing what connexion such a one's success has with the whole economy of the world. So also is no evil sent without its powerful reason; it is requisite, or else it would not be. And then, again, if we examine ourselves occasionally, we shall discover that want of success, disease, sorrow, and disappointment of all sorts, are not so much providential inflictions as the result of our own folly; we rush upon danger with both our eyes open; we discard the rules of prudence; we indulge to a point far beyond the strength of our frame to sustain, and then we wonder that we are poor, disappointed, or afflicted. Must the course of nature be suspended that we may escape the consequences of our own misconduct, when nothing but rashness or obstinacy was the cause of our affliction? So, also, when sickness invades our home, when our body is racked by pain, our brain filled with unendurable fire, the man who knows how to lean on God, will submit without a murmur, and wait with cheerful submission the moment when the decree of his restoration shall go forth. Because, is he not in the power of the same who fashioned him, body and soul, before he had yet seen the light of the world? and has not our Father many messengers to do his bidding—to bring healing and cure to the aching frame, if He deem a recovery necessary? And in case it be the will of the Most High that the hand of death shall not be stayed, that the soul shall be severed from the body, and the flesh return to the dust as it was, and the spirit go back to the Fountain whence it sprung: does not the believer know, that though he walk in the valley of the shadow of death

he need not fear evil, because his God is near him to guide him with his justice and his mercy to green pastures of undying verdure, and lead him by water-brooks of unfailing streams? And this God never dies, is never wearied, and his wealth is inexhaustible; wherefore, He can always bless; He can always protect; He can always remunerate whatever faith, whatever virtue, whatever mercy, man has made his own during his existence on earth. And what more can we ask? are our deeds of any value to the Lord? do we increase his or our happiness by our virtue and piety? is not all the reward of good deeds for ourselves? can we ever do enough to repay Him for the many favours He bestows on us, without ceasing, from our coming into the world till our departure hence?

Now, brethren, this was always the firm reliance and unfailing trust of the men of Israel from the beginning; this enabled Abraham to offer his son on the altar; this nerved Isaac to be bound a willing sacrifice to his Maker; this consoled Jacob during his long and weary pilgrimage, and made him trust in God, despite of his fearful trials; thus armed, Moses went before Pharaoh, though he had fled from his wrath; thus feeling did King David acknowledge the justice of the chastisement which his sin had called down on him; and thus convinced, not to add any more examples, Daniel resolved to remain faithful to the minutest precept of his religion, though he was a captive in Nebuchadnezzar's palace, and was subject to the caprice of him and other rulers. And was it not also this beautiful faith, which is willing to sacrifice all without stipulating for any reward, which

upheld our fathers amidst all their trials? Yea, in the dungeon arose to them the star of hope; on the broad ocean which they traversed from servitude to slavery they were guided by the cynosure of God's law; and amidst the terrors of a violent death there whispered to them a voice which never deceives, "Well done, ye faithful, the Father of mercy has accepted you and your deeds." And shall we of the present day be less trustful in God? shall we ask for more than his word has revealed to us? And say, where is the new light which is better, the promises which are more faithful than those of the Bible? Appeal to history; search all the records, and you will find no predictions which have stood the test of ages like those of Moses, none which have not been falsified by the unceasing course of events, except it be the foretellings of the messengers whom God sent to instruct and warn his people. And, therefore, if we have sinned, if we have, true to human nature, been faithless to our mission, then let us not abandon the path of duty which is laid before us, but let us heed the words of the prophet who says:

לכו ונשובה אל ה׳ כי הוא טרף וירפאנו יך ויחבשנו:
הושע ו׳ א׳:

"Come, let us return unto the Lord, for He hath torn and will heal us; He hath struck, and will bind up our wound." Hosea vi. 1.

Come, says he, to every one, let us return together; let all who feel the wound of a bruised spirit, of a contrite heart, repair to the presence of God, who is ready to receive all who may repent, and He will heal every bruise which his justice has struck, and bind

up every wound which unerring Wisdom was bound to inflict. Twice or thrice though we have sinned, though we have incurred spiritual death: still will He again and again breathe new life into us, that we may in the end stand regenerated before Him, and shine in the brilliancy of eternal life, which is the reward of those who heed his call, who obey and return; because it is the voice of their Father, who promises them mercy, because they grasp that almighty Hand which is stretched forth to snatch sinners from destruction, and blesses all who trust in his mercy. Let us, then, listen to the call, and live eternally, even as the Lord hath spoken. Amen.

Tishry 5th. } 5610.
Sept. 21st. }

DISCOURSE XVII.

ISRAEL'S TESTIMONY.

Protector of the universe! be graciously attentive to our prayer, when we call on Thee, and give us thy blessing, that we may live before Thee, and be accepted in thy presence. Lo! we have no altar, no priest, no sacrifice to make atonement for our iniquities, because thy sanctuary lies desolate, and thy children are strangers in a land which is not theirs. But thy mercies are from everlasting, and there is no end to thy goodness, and who can curse when Thou willest to bless? Hear us, therefore, and forgive and

pardon; and accept our worship as sweet incense on thy altar; and extend over us the pavilion of thy peace, that we may live among the nations of the earth distinguished as thy servants, as men in covenant with the Father of all flesh, that they may see that our trust is not in vain, and that our hope has not been deceitful, when they witness that we remain true to thy law, unawed by the threats of the violent, and unseduced by the blandishments of the ungodly. Yes, be our God before the eyes of all flesh, that thy Name may be magnified, and Thou be called the Holy One by the many nations, that they may know that Thou alone art the Lord Eternal, unchanged and undying, merciful and gracious and full of kindness to thy creatures. Amen.

Brethren!

At the recurrence of the festival* which we now celebrate, it well becomes us to look into the institutions of our religion in order to obtain a clear and comprehensive understanding of what we are to believe and what is required of us to do as sons of Israel. Let us therefore take for our contemplation this day the following verse from the forty-third of Isaiah:

אתם עדי נאם ה׳ ועבדי אשר בחרתי למען תדעו
ותאמינו לי ותבינו כי אני הוא לפני לא נוצר אל
ואחרי לא יהיה: ישע׳ מג׳ י׳:

"You are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen; in order that you may know, and believe in me, and understand, that I do exist, that before me there was no god formed, and after me there will be none." Isaiah xliii. 10.

* Feast of Tabernacles.

In these words, spoken by the imperishable God through his messenger, is assigned to us our mission, a mission than which nothing more glorious, more hopeful can be conferred on man. Glorious I call it; because the Lord of all has selected us from the mass of nations, all of whom are his children and his creatures, to testify concerning his existence, to proclaim to all his eternity and permanence, to bear aloft his standard to which ultimately all mankind are to flock, in order to range themselves under its ample folds as children of faith and truth, as followers of the only Sovereign of earth and heaven. It is also hopeful; because in all his toils man labours in doubt and trembling, lest his exertions be in vain, and lest disappointment frustrate the best-laid plans; but when we exert ourselves for the advancement of a divinely appointed task, we are assured of ultimate success, though we ourselves fail of beholding the accomplishment; for we are to be compared to workmen engaged in rearing a noble and magnificent pile, the erection of which will take perchance a century for its completion; but the very first stone laid as a foundation, the very first trowelful of mortar applied are so much contributed to the accomplishment of the great design, which but for this humble commencement could never have progressed.—So then we are like these builders, we have the plan before us, the end in view, and we are cheered on by the hope, the certainty I should say, that not a thought will be spent in vain, and not a word fall inefficient to the ground by which we stimulate ourselves and others to be true to our task, and that every event which transpires, will, united to those which are past and

yet to come, accomplish that which the Lord purposes to effect through our means, and for which He has called on us to be his witnesses among the children of man.

So let us look into the nature of our mission, and let us take due heed that we prepare ourselves by all available means to aid in its proper accomplishment. First, however, let us ask: "How are we to be distinguished as God's messengers? is it to be by a peculiarity of dress or speech, by seclusion from the world? by misanthropy? or, on the other side, by arrogance and contempt of our species? are we to go out into the world and exhort other people that they are in error? shall we be active missionaries by publicly denouncing the superstitions which we see on all sides around us?" To answer these questions, we can look for the only solution to the word of the Lord himself, and whatever that teaches is the course of conduct which we should adopt. But in reading the Scriptures, we shall see that we are not enjoined to wear a peculiar garb; nor are we commanded to shut ourselves out from an intercourse with the world; we are not told to hate those who differ from us: so on the other side do we not find any authority to look with contempt on others and to regard them as inferior to ourselves, nor to treat them as though we had received a commission to injure those of God's children who have no correct knowledge of their Father in heaven; nor do we discover any command to go out among mankind to denounce what we are taught to regard as wrong conceptions of important truths, or the actual deeds committed against the respect due to the Most High. But what we have been

taught is a system of laws and observances imposed on no other people than our own, and we are bidden to fulfil every precept therein contained; because the Lord who ordained the same is our God, who has a twofold claim to our obdience, the first, because He is the Creator in common of our own and all other nations of the earth, and the second, because we have peculiar and especial motives of gratitude why we should do what He has required of us; since these very acts are to remind us of those deeds of mercy and undeserved benevolence without which the people of Israel, of which we are the descendants and successors, could not have been in existence; inasmuch as they were requisite, first, to deliver them from the influence of those who held them in subjection, and secondly, to secure their attachment to the law which had been imparted to them as a portion of the promised redemption. Now this law does not contain any precept condemning social enjoyments; it does not enjoin hatred of our species, nor does it enforce the necessity of a peculiar garb or a particular manner of speaking; but on the contrary it permits the use, with very few exceptions, of all joys and pleasures, and these exceptions are founded upon the injurious tendency of the things interdicted; we are told to love our neighbours as ourselves, as also the stranger who may be within our gates; to serve even the enemy who may require our assistance; and to use as garments any fabric or material, with the sole limitation of the mixed kinds. In fact the Israelite was to be so only in his heart and domestic conduct, and not before the world, not to be looked upon as an extraordinary and eccentric

being, who wishes to be regarded as wiser or better than his neighbour. It is true we have outward acts of religion prescribed to us, which we are commanded to practise at every occasion when their performance is required. But they are not necessarily public exhibitions, only peculiar acts of the Israelite, which nevertheless need not be hidden from the eye of others differing from him in sentiments; apart however from these we have no command that we shall show ourselves unlike other persons. If now any one fancies that he fulfils a duty by an undue abstinence from enjoyments; if he imagines that much fasting, spending many hours in abstract contemplation, neglect of business and the requirements of social and political relations, are in consonance with Judaism, he certainly misconceives the truth; since such a course is nowise commanded or recommended even in Scripture. Moderation in all things, and acts of penance when we are self-convicted of wrong, are certainly enjoined; but this is something very different from leading a life of monastic seclusion, and looking on all worldly pleasures as so many transgressions. All that our religion contemplates is to educate men of a superior intellectual power. We shall enter life with all the zest and energy of youthful vigour, yet be at all times restrained within the limits prescribed by the Bible; we may eat, but the moment we discover any discrepancy between our food and what we are taught to abominate as unclean, we shall stop and remember that it is by the command of Him who gives us food that we are now told to restrain our appetite; we may mingle freely in society; so soon, however, as we are made conscious that we are in danger of being drawn

into the commission of deeds which our law condemns, we must arrest our will, and reflect that our God and Creator, who watches all our acts, commands us to make this sacrifice in obedience to his decrees. It is not therefore the outward man so much, as the conduct, which is to distinguish the Israelite; in every thought, in every word, in every act he should manifest his consciousness of the superintending watchfulness of God, which feeling will restrain him from doing anything which is declared to be displeasing to the Lord. But towards God's creatures, the intelligent beings who people the earth, we should be sedulously kind and obliging, and omit no opportunity of rendering them any service which their situation requires. Still we should take care not to carry complaisance so far as to forego our religious obligations, because they may make us appear singular or exclusive; since we have a higher obligation than mere politeness to guide us in our actions.—It is now precisely this system of life which is to distinguish us among men; for we should be devoted to a veneration of the Supreme and a thorough philanthropy; but as this latter is based upon the respect which we have for all of our species, because they are objects of God's tender care, it follows that duties towards the Lord take precedence of all others, and that nothing can of right interfere with their execution; because all men no less than we are bound to regard the Author of life as the first object whose wishes should be consulted and strictly obeyed.—Whatever therefore the Bible teaches, be it a small or an important thing, must be the characteristic of the Israelite; and it is his province accordingly to render him-

self thoroughly familiar with his duties, in order that he may be enabled at all times to practise them understandingly and with a singleness of purpose which has its origin in an entire submission to the will of the Lord.

But it may be asked, in the second place, "What do we effect by this quiet, unostentatious exhibition of our religion? how can we thereby be witnesses of God's power? what has our ceremonial observances to do in this respect? what does it teach the world, what does it declare which otherwise would not be inculcated, or would not be told?" To these questions we may answer freely, that a great deal depends on our being faithful to our religion, and that the world receives thereby a testimony of God's power which otherwise would not be imparted. Let us reflect a moment on the origin of many institutions which we practise to this day, and we shall see that they are not the arbitrary resolves of men, bent on having a sort of form on which they can unite as on a common ground, but that they are specially calculated to commemorate great and important events in our history, and which will ultimately, as we are told, have an important bearing on the affairs of mankind. Just open any part of the books of Moses, and you will see observances referred to historical events, or connected with and originating in some peculiar feature in the origin of our people. So we find circumcision ordained as a sign on the part of Abraham and his descendants, that they would be true to the terms of the covenant on their part, whereas the Lord promised that He would be to them a God, and confer on them his peculiar and more immediate vigilance and bless-

ing. If now a father brings his son before the assembly of the faithful to seal him with the sign of the Abrahamic covenant, he says in effect, though no words be spoken, that he believes that in times gone by there lived a man of singular piety and resignation, who, rejecting the idols and falsehoods of his time, his people and his kindred, devoted himself, although probed through a multitude of trials, to the service and acknowledgment of the One Supreme, and that he received as a mark of approbation the promise of divine protection for himself and all his generations, provided that, as an evidence of their own adherence to the true faith, they should each and all circumcise their male children at the age of eight days. When now the father, rejoicing that his lineage shall not fail, because he has been blessed with a son, pronounces the benediction after that his son has been enrolled among the successors of the faithful through the blood of the circumcision: "Blessed art thou, O Lord, our God! King of the universe, who hast sanctified us with thy commandments, and commanded us to cause this one to enter into the covenant of Abraham," it is not an unmeaning thing, but he utters words of high significance; for he opens thus the vista of the past; he beholds the Lord of heaven speaking intelligibly to our first special ancestor; he hears Him announcing himself as the only Creator, the Proprietor of heaven and earth; he listens in rapt attention, how He promises his mercy and his covenants to the child of the dust, and he witnesses how this one, renowned among the sons of the East for his wisdom and his achievements, submits at once to the decree of his God, neither com-

plaining of the unreasonableness and hardship of the act, nor asking why it was not enjoined at an earlier period of life, and thus setting an example of what filial obedience should be, that is, a ready, uncomplaining, instantaneous compliance with whatever the Lord may ordain. And who was it for whom Abraham felt this beautiful devotion? Was it a multitude of gods? a troupe? an association? a duality? a trinity? or any other conceivable idea except a simple Unity, homogeneous in his whole essence, uniform in consistency, and not composed of parts or members, in harmony with himself, self-sufficient in power and happiness? Then look at the introduction to chapter seventeen of Genesis, where it says: "I am the Almighty God, walk before me and be perfect." But one person, to borrow a word applicable only to man and not to God, is here speaking. He calls himself "I am," his nature, again to use a human word, is, "the Almighty God," or as others will render it, the "Everlasting God," the One Power all-pervading, through all time and eternity, consequently without associate or rival in the dominion over all creation. This Power, however, it is, who promised to be the Adored of Abraham and his seed; consequently all who join themselves to Abraham's covenant declare, in an emphatic testimony, that they believe in God, that they fully assent to the great principle of the monotheistic idea, "that before our God there was no god formed, and that after Him there will be none;" which includes also the full belief, that we cannot imagine a time when the Lord did not exist, and that we can form no conception of any period when He will be no longer. Yea, the father of the child becomes a witness that he be-

lieves; the innocent babe also is a witness that the commandment is observed as it was given in the beginning; the sponsors are witnesses that they truly and faithfully believe in the Lord and his ordinances; and the bystanders are a living testimony that Israelites of all ages and all countries are yet willing to follow God's lead, to confide in his word, to obey his laws, and that they reject and utterly abhor all thoughts and conceptions which are opposed to the belief in the Unity which is theirs, and that they will reject and abhor all doctrines which are calculated to break off their connexion with the times that are passed, when we went out to follow the footsteps of the Lord in the trackless sands of the desert, as the confiding bride hastens to her new home, to the house of her newly espoused husband, sure of a loving and joyous reception. Yes, they all declare that they know of no truth which is not contained in the law, and that they cannot accept any doctrine or dispensation which would teach the contrary. They therefore practise circumcision, they therefore assemble to sanctify the occasion by their presence, to assert that they believe in only the One God whom Abraham feared and loved, the One who announced himself as the sole Governor of all things, and whose power is not limited, whose actions are not controlled, and whose glory is not shared by any other being; for none can exist near Him on earth, there is none beside Him in heaven.

So also let us look at the precepts which are given as memorials of our going out of Egypt, and we shall find the same characteristic belonging to them as to our first national commandment. We have before

adverted to the fact that the liberation of the Israelites and their wandering through the desert, had the effect of exhibiting at every step the power and greatness of God; they proved that He who could do all this without let or hindrance must be indeed supreme in power and wisdom; consequently that He is preeminently the true God, or, as He has taught us to call Him, "the Lord the God of Israel." So whatever we observe of these precepts is in fact a declaration that we believe in the supremacy of the God of Israel, and that we confide in no other power as having ability to work aught without his consent, or to alter the least which He ordains. In saying, therefore, that we believe ourselves to be a chosen people, we also at the same time give an emphatic testimony against the alleged power of other beings, which have no existence except in the distempered imagination of their followers, and can therefore not claim our worship or deserve our homage. Were it that there existed any other divinity besides the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, he could of right contradict what we have been taught to regard as sacred; for as a god he must either have coëqual power, or at least be able to shield us against the wrath of our Father, in case He should be offended at our disregard of his ordinances. Hence do those who believe in an association of gods in one confederacy teach that one of the persons abolished the law, and nailed it, as they call it, to the cross on which he suffered a temporal death in expiation of the sins of mankind. In contradiction to this belief, which is founded upon the assumption that there is a plurality in the godhead, we eat the Passover-bread, we celebrate the Feast

of Weeks, we blow the cornet on the Day of Memorial, we fast on the Day of Atonement, and we dwell in booths on the Feast of Tabernacles, and use the four species of the vegetable world specified in the law to thank the Lord for all his goodness, to remind ourselves at each act that it is in obedience to a perpetual divine command proceeding from the unalterable and eternal God that we observe to do these things, even as He has enjoined on us in his law given through his servant Moses. Understand, therefore, that it is not so much the mere ceremonial act which we perform in the various matters appertaining to the festivals, as the deep sense accompanying them which gives them value. And whether you eat the unleavened bread or wave the palm-branch, it is a testimony that you truly believe in the recorded word of God, and that you affirm your adherence to the ancient covenant in all its binding force and obligation, and that you mean to look for salvation solely through the mercy of the Lord; inasmuch as you hope that He will accept in favour your service, and purify in his goodness whatever you may deface in the moral excellence of your soul through the liability to sin, to which human nature is always prone. And whether you listen devoutly to the sounding of the cornet, fast on the great day of national humiliation, or merely assemble for worship on the day of the Pentecost, or this festival of conclusion, distinguished by no peculiar ceremonial, you again declare that you utterly reject the assumption that the law has been abolished; because you assert that the person, who, it is alleged to have done so, has no divine power, is no god, has no existence, consequently that he could not absolve

you, the children of Israel, from that obligation which your Father imposed on you when He chose you from all nations to be his. It is not then the minuteness of the observances, nor the little evident meaning which they at times present to the mere rationalist, which should lessen their value in your eyes; for behold it is in little things in which you can succeed to a full measure to be obedient, and it is these very acts, as was said on a former occasion, which more than anything else show that they proceeded from the highest Wisdom, as human invention would have taxed its utmost ingenuity to find some act of a magnificent kind for each festival to render it fit for the acceptance of the divine Majesty. But now it is a series of small things to outward appearance which is demanded, and by observing it, we declare that we confide in the Wisdom whence it sprung, and bear witness that we believe in the sole existence of the Eternal One from whom it emanates, as we are assured in the law.

It is in this way that our ceremonial acts, in making a bar between us and other nations, prove us to be adherents to the God of Abraham, who subsequently became the national God of the Israelitish people, not as excluding his rule over all other people, but because, except among us, the divine power was supposed to be lodged in a multiplicity of beings, whose power nevertheless falls short of our Adored One, even if we allow the utmost weight to the superstitious views of antiquity which have come down to us. This has also been the mission of Israel, to be always on earth, and to declare by our simple presence that we believe that there is a higher Power than any whom the nations profess to worship, and that there

is no actual truth in any system except in the law which God himself proclaimed. This has been our appointment; and we have acted up to its spirit through many a vicissitude and tribulation; and even when we refused to obey, the evils which ever and anon befell us called us back to our station, and willing or unwilling we have been compelled to testify to the truth of God's words; inasmuch as obedience proved how happy all are who thoroughly confide in his law, and since whenever we disregarded the injunctions of religion the sad consequences of our dereliction soon convinced us that it is not an idle threatening which the Bible denounces against backsliders, and that the Lord has ample means to execute whatever He has announced through his prophets.

In this manner, then, have we from the beginning of our national origin vindicated the judgments of God, and thereby proved at the same time his existence; whereas these things could not have been, were there not a divine Providence acting uniformly, and always influencing the affairs of men. And do you believe that this silent teaching has been without its effect? do you imagine that our example has been lost on the great mass of human beings not belonging to Israel? Then look around you, and see what has occurred. Thirty centuries ago our nation sprung up in the desert of Arabia, almost like the storm-cloud which appears at the verge of the horizon, not larger than the hand of a man; but anon it grows and expands, and ere you are aware the skies are darkened with it, and the thunders roll from amidst the deep gloom, and the lightnings flash, and the rain pours down in copious showers. It is true our nation has

not so suddenly deluged the world with its doctrines; but the mass is nevertheless spreading, it encircles the horizon of mankind more and more; and the time will yet come when it will assuredly complete what it has begun; and then the mighty storm will uproot the foundations of falsehood, and the bright flashes of the divine light will obliterate every error, and the refreshing outpouring of the divine word will quicken every heart; and then will all intelligent spirits acknowledge that we have borne true testimony, and that the word of God with us is the sole truth unto salvation; on that hopeful day there will be peace and joy on earth, no nation shall lift up sword against nation, God's rule will extend over all creatures, who will acknowledge Him alone as God, and call Him the Eternal One ה' אחד blessed be his memorial forever more. Amen.

Tishry 21st. } 5610.
October 7th. }

DISCOURSE XVIII.

THE DIVINE JUDGMENT.*

O FATHER! accept in favour our appearing before Thee this day, in common with the other inhabitants of this commonwealth, who come to offer unto Thee the incense of thanksgiving. Behold, Thou hast

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* Delivered on public Thanksgiving Day.

blessed the land with thy bounty, and the garners are full of the produce of the earth, and the flocks are clothed with fatness, and everywhere appear the evidences of plenty and ease. And the pestilence, which but lately terrified all, and hung like a black cloud laden with death and sorrow over forest and plain, has disappeared from among us, and men breathe once again more free, almost forgetful that they have but just escaped from the jaws of destruction. And now a sound is heard through the extent of the land, admonishing all to remember Thee, to reflect that it is Thou who hast blessed the harvest, and that it is Thou who hast arrested the destroyer, and that thine is the glory for giving all the good and averting the evil. We, therefore, have come this day into thy sanctuary to offer up unto Thee the homage of our hearts for the many benefits bestowed on us, and because Thou hast preserved us, although our deeds are sinful, and we have not amended the evil of our course. We are blessed, but not for our righteousness; and we are spared, without any merit; yet it was thy pleasure to extend over us the shield of thy power, and to cover us with the shadow of thy mercy, to enable us to stand before Thee, and to continue in our own persons the descendants of Israel thy servant. Accept, then, O Father! the words of our lips, insufficient though they be, as an offering meet for Thee, and disdain not to regard with favour the praise which we utter for the life Thou hast granted, and for the benefits Thou hast heaped on us; and teach us how to employ both to promote the glory of thy kingdom, that we may be the means of blessings to others, and earn thy pleasure in the life everlasting. Amen.

Brethren!

The Psalmist says:

יודוך עמים אלהים יודוך עמים כלם: ישמחו וירננו
לאמים כי תשפט עמים מישר ולאמים בארץ תנחם
סלה: תהל' סז' ד' ה':

"The nations shall praise Thee, O God! the nations all shall praise Thee. The people shall rejoice, and sing for joy; for thou wilt judge the nations righteously, and govern the people of the earth." Ps. lxvii. 4, 5.

It may perhaps strike you as singular that the Scriptures represent the world as rejoicing when God executes judgment; and you may ask, "Is not punishment meted out when God sits in judgment on sinners? Is not even his righteousness the signal for retribution on evildoers? Why then are men bidden to rejoice? to give thanks for such an event? Nay, how can all be included in the admonition? Are they too to utter praise who feel the weight of the visitation?" These questions open for us a field of inquiry into the nature of the Divine government, and the relative position of the sons of man to Him, their Judge and Ruler.

In the first place, then, when God sits in judgment, punishment is meted out to those deserving it; his very righteousness is condemnation to the transgressors. But this is, in the second place, actual cause for rejoicing, even to those who are reached by the visitation which their deeds have merited. Let us see. Were a man to judge the acts of his fellows, he might enter upon the task with prejudice, with limited knowledge, with an insufficiency of intellect to com-

prehend fully the matter to be brought before him. He would have to examine witnesses as prejudiced, as ignorant, as fallible as himself; he would have to judge from hearsay and from circumstances, have to combine broken chains of evidence, to reconcile contradictions, and to sift the correctness of the denial or of the mute refusal of the criminal to plead at all. If, after all this, a verdict is rendered, how clear soever the evidence may appear to you, there is left room to doubt in the minds of others. Therefore, there is no universal rejoicing at the rendition of human judgment; and what one party would characterize as justice, as necessary to the peace of the state and the safety of society, is styled by the other unnecessary cruelty and unheard-of barbarity. *Power* will call the inflexible judge the saviour of his country, the man who has deserved well of his fatherland for having had the independence to discharge his duty despite of the popular clamour; whereas, *those whose interest is affected* by the decision will pour out the full measure of their wrath on the obsequious magistrate, as they call him, for perverting justice and condemning the innocent.

But when the Lord Almighty sits in judgment, there is no room left to accuse Him of prejudice, of ignorance, and fallibility; since He has a knowledge of all things as they occur constantly before Him. He need not, therefore, ask the accused; He need not wait their pleading, their confession, or their denial. Their silence does not confound his omniscience; their speech does not wipe away his knowledge, nor render uncertain of what their own doings have made Him cognizant. Consequently, He can have no error

laid to his charge, nor prejudice, which is always the result of insufficient information; for, even assume that a man may have opportunity for knowing something, as soon as he allows himself to be governed by his affections or hatred, he is no longer able to survey the whole case presented to him; his power of judging is abridged; and hence arises his partiality for or against what he is to decide on. But the Lord sees not with human eyes; He looks at all deeds divested of every species of favour or ill-will. Hence, he sees everything as it is; the good, in its imperfect state, but crime, also, lacking much of the full measure which its originators contemplated; and hence He brings to the office of the Universal Judge all the requirements necessary to enable Him to render perfect justice, and to satisfy the claims of universal equity. He therefore condemns individuals and nations who have been weighed in the balance and found deficient in merits and burdened with iniquity; and the punishment follows in the train of his indignation,—not as though He delighted in the suffering which He inflicts, but because the deed itself draws after it the evil consequences which men call punishment. If wounding the flesh with a sharp dagger will cause the blood to flow,—if to drain the cup of intoxicating drink will produce drunkenness, not, as you would call it, by an especial retribution inflicted at the moment, but in consequence of the means employed producing, from their very nature, the result which you see,—just so is it with moral delinquencies, of which you do not perceive the immediate effects which they produce. They eat, as it were, around themselves in the moral world, like a cancer

in the flesh; they poison the springs of life; they corrupt the healthy circulation: and all of a sudden there comes retribution. You fancy it is an unexpected, an unaccountable occurrence; but trace it to its source, and you will see that it is the consequence, the legitimate deduction, of a long train of events; and you will have to acknowledge that it was justice, equity, righteousness, which produced the effect before you. So, if you behold a man in the vigour of life wasting away in a premature decay of the vital functions,—if you see his hand shake, and his tottering limbs refuse to carry him any farther,—you must not wonder at his state, if you know that he gradually undermined his constitution by loitering in wineshops, by indulging at late hours in the company of convivial friends; on the contrary, you will say, with justice, that no human frame could have sustained so great a pressure without suffering to the full extent that woful change which the sufferer before you exhibits. You may regret his fate; you may weep for him; you may pity him: but you cannot avert the early and sure doom which awaits him.

In the same manner may you often trace direct consequences, natural results, as springing from any course of conduct, in nations no less than individual members of society. Nations also become inebriates; they become intoxicated by the tide of success which lifts them up to the height of refinement and glory, and they begin to sink instanter into effeminacy and moral debasement. The preceding generation may have toiled laboriously to build up cities; to level mountains; to scoop out harbours; to promote agriculture; to establish manufactories; to encourage

commerce; to found seats for learning, and devise a system of wise legislation. The hardy pioneers in all these improvements must naturally be God-chosen men; they are the sturdy friends of liberty, the just in public life, the abstemious in their diet; men who can sleep on the hard soil, travel barefoot over the frozen ground, and despise the trappings of fashion and the elegancies of over-refinement. They are sent occasionally to purify the moral atmosphere by the thunder of their eloquence, by the daring with which they oppose the waves of popular corruption. But barely are they called to their rest, when the new generation imagine that they are wiser than their fathers, and that the same means which they employed to build up a glorious fabric are not necessary to sustain it erect. Hence they rush into extravagance, into the indulgence of carnal pleasures, into pampering of a base appetite, into inglorious inactivity. And what is the result? a deterioration of the race, both physical and mental; the hardy frame of the robust pioneer sinks into the dwarfed size of the diminutive votary of fashion, into the fopling of a lady's drawing-room; and the child of him who was listened to in the popular assembly with breathless attention, whose word was law to a thousand, is content to be foremost on the race-course, to be known for the immoderate quantity of wine he can swallow. But it is not one only who thus retrogrades; for the example becomes contagious, and you see the children of the mighty recede slowly before a new and more active class of men, unheard-of adventurers whose name is unknown to fame: till, in their turn, their children sink, like those of the others, in the general corrup-

tion which has seized on the land. The monuments of antiquity may still be there to admonish; the images of the ancient heroes, raised on lofty pedestals, may be undestroyed, and speak in silent eloquence, to a degenerate posterity, of deeds of which they are now incapable; the laws, too, which were once spoken of as the consummation, the perfection of wisdom, may still be preserved; but nothing in the shape of uninterrupted prosperity can arrest the downward course of events; and should peace continue for a hundred centuries, you would still say that such a state carries within it the seeds of its own dissolution. So sank Babylon, so sank Hellas, so sank Rome; it was because corruption had usurped the place of virtue, enervating luxury the place of simplicity of manners; and it required scarcely a prophet's eye to foresee the downfall of the mighty, when their own misconduct too surely presaged the eventful future.

If we now believe, as men who trust in Providence, that God watches over the deeds of his creatures: what more natural result should we expect than that He should send us warnings, in order to admonish us that our course is wrong, that our deeds are corrupt, while it is yet time to arrest the downward tendency of national deterioration? And should not nations listen when they perceive the finger of the Lord in the passing events? in the unexpected war? in the blight of their produce? in the assaults of the pestilence? Should they not rejoice the rather that, though his righteousness ordains the visitation, his mercy spares the guilty by not sending down, as upon Sodom and Gomorrah, fire and brimstone, to consume at once those who, knowing their duty, have neverthe-

less preferred to travel on crooked paths? Yes, it is the voice of God which speaks in national calamities, which forewarns before the final destruction. It is the calamity of sickness which precedes the death of the individuals: it is the upheaving of the elements which warns in national events. Is it war? we may fairly assume that violence and injustice have been at work, either with us or our neighbours, whence come then the collisions of excited passions, the conflict of contending interests. Is it a continued series of unpropitious harvests? we may be assured that internal discord, misgovernment, pride and arrogance have called on Heaven's tribunal for visitation to remind the inhabitants of the earth of their misdeeds. Is it the pestilence which ravages the land? then let us be certain that moral corruption has testified against a country, and that the destroyer has been sent to admonish men to repent them of their evil deeds. Men may say what they please, they may gloss over their faults with ever so much ingenuity; but it is all in vain: the Judge of all the earth sees their deeds, and weighs them all in the even balance of justice, and in the same measure as iniquity is found to prevail, so will national calamities be seen to follow in their train. But one thing is to be considered here also. Nations must not think that, because they have not suffered nationally, they have no collective sins to answer for; because it is with them as it is with sinners in general, punishment does not always follow immediately on the transgression. We cannot place ourselves in the judgment-seat of God, and condemn or approve in his stead, to pronounce on what deserves or does not merit retribution. Nor is it cer-

tain, on the other hand, that punishment is not actually in preparation, and may not be soon ready to burst over the land with terrific violence. Was not Belshazzar feasting in the midst of his brilliant court, drinking wine out of the holy vessels which the Chaldean conqueror had brought from Jerusalem? Was he not gay and confident, even whilst the Persians were knocking at his gates? He was frightened by the hand which wrote on the wall; still he augured not the doom which impended over him; and nevertheless, in the simple language of Scripture, "in that night was Belshazzar slain."

Let it, then, be the study of all men and nations who confide in the divine Justice, not to let chastisements pass by unheeded, as though they were chance-blows struck by fortuitous fate. There is no such principle as fate or chance in the world's government; nothing exists without design; the Architect is discoverable in every pebble, in every floweret which greets the eye: nothing occurs, also, without an object; the Judge appears in every event which history records, that which has happened, or can by possibility come to pass. To suppose that any power beside God could order any event, would at once assume a multiplicity of divine beings. Either chance is powerless, or it is co-equal or superior to God. The very statement of the question proves its absurdity. We may, indeed, concede that, in general, Nature is allowed to operate; that is to say, certain fixed causes are permitted to produce certain and fixed results; but this only says that there are inherent forces implanted in substances and events by the Author of all things, which will exert a certain power on those sub-

ject to their influence, just as we find hunger is appeased by our eating food, and our thirst is allayed by our drinking water. It is, nevertheless, the universal God who thus acts, the great Almighty who is felt in his creation. And however slight, therefore, the effect elicited, it is He who has sent the means to effect it; it is by his gift the result is produced. It is no argument to allege that such little things are unworthy of his greatness; as futile as it is to assert that other deeds are too mighty for Him to accomplish. I have dwelt, before this, on the difference which exists between the Creator in his deeds and the mortal in his labour. The Omniscient surveys all things at one moment, and exerts his power in every direction at the self-same time: whereas man sees but what is within his horizon, and of this but a small portion distinctly; and while he is engaged in one thing, everything else becomes excluded from his sphere of action. If, therefore, any object be ever so small, it is still within God's field of vision; it is a part of the entire mass of things, consequently open and accessible to Him, without any effort or peculiar labour. Hence He can exert his influence, as He actually does, in the most minute events, and regard with paternal care all the variety of objects throughout the whole creation. Impossibility is accordingly no word which can be applied to God, as, also, nothing is unworthy of his notice. If chastisement be now felt on earth, we must recognize it as a manifestation of Providence, exerted for the improvement of mankind; for, since we cannot assume that the Most Holy would act without an object, and as He delights not in the pain of his creatures, we must arrive at the

conclusion that He means thereby to purify, to correct, to elevate those who otherwise might be fatally injured, in case the punishment had not been dispensed.

We say, therefore, that nations can, nay should, thank the Lord though He appear as the Judge; for they may be sure that He acts not from caprice or from malevolence, is not impelled by ignorance or prejudice to wreak his ill temper upon the resistless mortals that crawl as it were in the dust before Him. He knows the national failings; He recognizes the transgression of communities; wherefore He bids famine to seize at times on the inhabitants of a land, to destroy for them the harvest in the field; He loosens the dogs of war, and havoc is heard in the populous streets; or He sends forth the pestilence to slay those marked for death, and though to man there may appear no discrimination in the destruction which goes forward, we may be assured that not a hair falls to the ground without the Judge's knowledge and assent. And when communities see themselves thus exposed to the wrath of the Father, should they not pause in their career? Should they not reflect and see what there is to amend? What good deed remains to be accomplished? What better instruction can they expect; what better teacher can they desire, than the manifestation of the will of the most Merciful, that He asks of them to become reconciled to Him through the means which he has placed within their power? You may say that the Bible only speaks to the Jews who now have no national government; but that all other people have no duty assigned to them in our Scriptures: whence you

would argue that there are no detailed national statutes obligatory on non-Israelites according to the letter of the Bible. But there is an error in this, which arises in confounding the ceremonial duties with the universal principles of morality and justice which the Word of God has revealed. It is only true of the law which Moses commanded us that it is the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob. But all else besides is the universal inheritance of mankind; and as soon as the message reaches them, they become invested with the obligation of obeying its behests as implicitly as we of the house of Israel. Was it, you think, unjust for God to send Jonah to preach destruction over Nineveh? Was it wrong in Him to denounce a fatal doom over Babylon, Egypt, Edom, and Tyre? Or do you suppose that the actual destruction, which has overwhelmed so many states besides our own, has been an unjust and arbitrary infliction? No one will think so who reviews their national crimes, their sinning against the laws of humanity, their treason against the rights of man. Hence, you must come to the conclusion that the laws of morality and neighbourly love apply alike to the whole family of man, especially those who have received a knowledge of them by having a transcript of the Scriptures in their possession. It matters not how this knowledge has been obtained, whether through one or the other alleged prophets descended from Abraham: it is enough that the law is known to civilized men, and this is sufficient to make it as binding on them all as it was originally on us.

We may therefore hold up the Bible to our neighbours, and bid them judge of themselves by its laws

of justice and mercy; and it is a happy thing that those nations that are most governed by its spirit are the very ones where the greatest prosperity prevails, and where security of life and all pursuits is based upon the firmest foundation. That these too often neglect the laws which most benefit them, is a thing to be expected from the natural tendency of men to be sinful; and we therefore recognize the mercy of God in his judgment, that He recalls them occasionally by his retributive decrees to bethink themselves of their course to regain the favour which they are in danger of losing. It will, therefore, be happy for them if they amend the evil of their way betimes, and wait not till some prophet call to them in a future day, "But yet forty days are granted when Nineveh shall be destroyed;" and let not the beauty of their cities and the fertility of their lands inflate them with the idea that not such could ever be their fate. Beautiful was Babylon; magnificent shone on the Tigris the city of the Assyrian kings; gardens and fields were there, yielding their increase for millions of inhabitants, and innumerable herds and flocks were grazing in their ample meadows: and now the site of Babylon is scarcely recognizable amidst the awful desolation which reigns around, and Nineveh is just emerging from its sepulchre of more than two thousand years, perhaps to fall through this very exhumation into utter ruin. And is a similar overthrow out of the range of possibility for other towns? for other lands? Can you measure the scourges in the stores of God? Can you determine when and how He will be able to make you feel his power? O, do not so brave the justice of God! let one warning suffice, and

exert yourselves to spread truth and mercy through the land, that the Lord in his goodness may avert henceforward the evil from again visiting the borders of this country.

It was but lately that pale terror dwelt on many a lip, when the news of the awful mortality that then commenced to rage was spread abroad, and men of all creeds came to ask of God to stay the plague, and to send healing to those already suffering from its attacks. It was the will of our Father to listen to the sighs and the prayers of the many who humbled themselves in their distress; and now we rejoice that the destroyer has left us, and we already forget almost that not long ago we trembled at the extended hand of justice. Let us now be wise, brethren; let us be truly thankful, not in words, not in outward expressions, but in conduct; let us show that we acknowledge God's justice, that we praise Him as our Benefactor, that we love Him as our Father; in short, let us be obedient, let us follow his counsels, thereby offering Him such a sacrifice as will exceed the fat of rams and the blood of sacrificial steers. Thus doing, we shall live truly under the government of the Most High, and contribute by our means to the diffusion of justice and good-will. You may say, that as Israelites our political influence is small, it cannot be appreciated nor felt in the national councils; but this is not the question; it is not for you to say how much or how little you can effect. Act your part faithfully, be just yourselves, love one another, be true to your religion, discard party-spirit, and practise universal philanthropy; at the same time encourage others to follow your example, and contribute all in your power

to save this republic, the refuge of the oppressed, where the fugitive child of Israel can find a home and shelter, from the fate of other states which have sunk, because they would not worship God, and would not recognize his justice. So will you fulfil your duty as good citizens and faithful adherents of your Father in heaven, whose power be your shield, and whose mercy your protection, now and forever. Amen.

Kislev 13th. } 5610.
Nov'br 27th. }

DISCOURSE XIX.

INTERPRETATION OF PROPHECY.

O Thou, Almighty Father, who art the sole God in heaven and on earth! we call on Thee to bless our assembling in thy sanctuary, to offer our prayers and thanksgiving at this season of rejoicing, because of the mercies Thou didst show towards thy people, when the mighty rose up against them. New opinions had taken deep root among Israel; the stranger was strong in the many adherents his philosophy had acquired among those belonging to our household; and it only needed the arm of power, as man might have fancied, to entirely uproot the worship of Thee from our land. But Thou, Father! didst not look on heedless of the strife of mortals; and, Thou strengthenest the arm of Matthithyah and his sons; and they rose in the might of heroes, and overthrew the oppressors,

expelled the stranger armies from our soil, and restored the service unto thy profaned sanctuary. And thus it was thy will to maintain the knowledge of thy religion; and from the bottom of distress sprang up those who were firm and faithful, and who transmitted the truth, which they had preserved, to us their latest descendants. O grant, then, Almighty God! that the recurrence of the memorial of the reconsecration of thy house may have an abiding effect on us; and that when we light the outward lamp of commemoration, we may be enabled to resolve to kindle within us the fire of devotion and obedience, and that we may thus be animated with the will and the spirit of the Asmoneans of old, to defend thy law at all hazards, and to sustain thy religion though all the world were leagued against us. And be it also thy will that success may attend our exertions, and that we may see the fruits of our labours in thy cause, in the conversion of sinners, and the confirmation of the righteous. So shall our spirit praise Thee, and the glory of thy greatness shall fill our mouth, and the nations shall hear of thy Name, and worship Thee in truth as do thy people Israel. Amen.

Brethren!

The prophet Zechariah says in ii. 14:

רני ושמחי בת ציון כי הנני בא ושכנתי בתוכך נאם ה׳ : זכר׳ ב׳ יד׳ :

"Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for behold I will come and dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord."

To one who has even but some superficial knowl-

edge of Scripture, there must be something curious in the attitude which the world at large occupies towards the Jews. The Bible apparently says one thing, and the world another; the Scripture speaks of Israel, the world insists that some other persons are meant; and still we stand in the same position we always have stood, and it would be curious, indeed, if the error should be on our part, and that we must, therefore, have been all along groping our way in doubt and darkness. One of two things must be admitted, either we are right now, or were always wrong; or, it must be exhibited by undoubted proof, that we have at some time, since the Bible was delivered into our safe-keeping, changed our position, that is to say, that we commenced a different course of life from what we were accustomed to before. The question then resolves itself into these simple propositions: Of whom does the Bible speak, when using the terms Zion, daughter of Zion, Jacob, Israel, and the like? and if it be the literal descendants of Jacob, have these then so far changed their mode of life as not to be any longer in the same attitude towards God, which they occupied in the time of the prophets?

Now, as regards the first question, it is to be presumed that the prophets must have had an intelligible meaning in the hearing of those to whom they were sent, to as great an extent at least, if not greater, than they have to us at the present day. Look, therefore, into their works, as we may freely call the writings or records of prophecy which have come down to us, and you will see that they are uniformly addressed to their own countrymen, when they call them by name, or by some metaphorical expression which as clearly

defined them. Whenever they wanted to speak to and of other nations, whenever they referred to other countries than Palestine, they did not lack words to give a clear expression of their ideas, and we may be assured that, if any obscurity does exist in the prophetic writings, it is owing to our want of knowledge of the attendant circumstances under which they were composed, and not to any defect in information on the part of the sacred writers themselves. There is so much sublimity, such force, such elegance, such precision in their denunciations and promises, that no one, with any degree of common sense, can for a moment have any doubt of their general tendency; and only the expressions of an unknown signification can at all be relied upon as an excuse for an occasional misapprehension. But, to say that Israel is not Israel, that Zion means Rome, or Athens, or anything else than the veritable city of David; that the daughter of Zion or Jerusalem means the church, whatever that may be; that Jerusalem means an association of some sort, founded upon another scheme than the upholding of the unity of God, is to argue as though words had no definite meaning, and were intended to conceal, not to express thoughts. And even granted for a moment that the sacred messengers when addressing Israel meant actually some other nation, a question would naturally arise as to the new identity. We will state the proposition: Israel is not the natural Israel, Zion is not the city of David, the one well known in history, the other in the geography of the world. Where are we now to look for them? are we to go to Arabia to hunt for the former, amidst the half-savage tribes that roam over the desert? are we

to go to Mekka to find our new Zion? Unquestionably, the followers of Mahomed might put in a claim for these distinctions, for all we can know of the matter; and hence, the Arabs may be the new Israel and their holy city the new Jerusalem. But this will not satisfy our Nazarene neighbours; they claim to be an Israel more spiritual than the Jews, more elect than the followers of Mahomed, and hence, they assert that all the blessings are centred in them; that all the good the prophets speak of is, or will be, fulfilled in and through them; and though some will not exclude the literal descendants of Jacob altogether, they do it with so many qualifications as to render any good to be expected for the Jews, as such, totally valueless for them in a national point of view. Perhaps, no words have ever been so much tortured as Zion and Jerusalem. The Jews find them in Palestine, a little east from the Mediterranean Sea, not far from where the Jordan rolls its sacred waves into the bosom of the Sea of Salt, which marks the ancient site of the sinful cities of Sodom and its consorts; but to the Nazarene, however he may cherish the soil on which the alleged founder of his religion is said to have walked; however he may erect churches, chapels, convents, and monuments, on each particular spot which he conceives hallowed by events, which he supposes to have taken place in ages gone by, and which he fancies shed a glory and a brilliancy on his faith—I say, to the Nazarene, they convey a signification very different; he has a mode of interpreting entirely his own, he has a literal and a spiritual sense of words, and if the first suit him, you must not expect that he will forego any advantage resulting there-

from; but if this be against his opinion as taught by his priests, or as he has elaborated it himself, he will adopt a spiritual rendering of evident words, and so transform them, that no one could possibly recognize them under their new guise, though he have written them himself. What this spiritual rendering may be, depends altogether upon the circumstances of the case; it may be one thing, or it may be the other. For instance, the dry bones of Ezekiel are, as the prophet actually says, the house of Israel; so far the spiritualizers will go with us; but how many singular applications have not been made of this vision or actual occurrence, in which Ezekiel, by the command of God, revived so many slain ones of the house of Israel. If you read to the end of the section, you will find glorious promises for the descendants of Jacob, the assurance of a resurrection, a restoration to the land of Israel, and the prediction of life. But before the spiritualist reaches thus far, he has already exhausted his ingenuity on the vision of the dry bones; he fancies, therefore, that he has done enough in imagining that the fleshless remains of humanity prefigurate the spiritual wants of our people at the present day; and the breath which was to return into the bodies of the slain, he imagines to be his pretended new revelation which, as was already then foreshadowed, should supplant the old system in our possession.

But I pray you read the first fourteen verses of the thirty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel, with a simple intention of being taught what the words of the Bible convey, and you will not find a word of a new law, a modern revelation, or a new spirituality. The Lord is spoken of as putting a spirit into the dead, so that

they shall live. He says that He will open the graves of his people,—mind the prophet speaks of the bones being emblematic of, or actually the whole house of Israel, and that they shall live, and be brought back to live in peace in their own land. Where do you discover here any allusion to a new law? to a revelation not then known? to a spirit which was to be foreign to our religion? Or you may say the new law is to be identical with the old, a perfection of its original principles; but Ezekiel speaks of no such change or addition as impending over the religion which he then professed, and surely no one will say that the modern system of the Nazarenes is identical in any shape with the conduct of Israelites under the ancient law. This spiritualizing has not even the advantage of the word *new* being introduced into the prophecy, so as to read "And I will put my new spirit in you, and you shall live," for it simply says "my spirit;" wherefore, unless you are aided by some instruction derived from a source other than the Bible, you cannot discover in the whole passage an allusion to the alleged repeal of the Jewish Law. We know of but one spirit of life, that is the will of God, here sent to revive the dead, as elsewhere it is given as the law which He put in our mouth, not to depart thence to all eternity (Isa. lix. 21). Where, then, we ask, is the warrant for the curious and constant misapplication of Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones? the shaking of which the gentiles aver is perceived among them whenever an effort is made or to be made to convert them from their religion? It is surprising, indeed, that men of sense can endeavour so far to impose on others equally sensible, with such silly misapplication

of the holy word of God; but so it is; and much as we may regret this want of candour in those who pretend to read the Bible for instruction solely, we cannot say that this system of error does not exist.

Having thus given you a specimen of half literal and half spiritual exposition, let us revert back to the words Zion and Jerusalem. They, of course, mean the literal city when it is said that Zion shall be desolate, when it is predicted that Jerusalem shall be overthrown; but when mention is made of future greatness, of glory, of the divine Presence to be again restored to the new-built temple, which is never to be defiled any more by the uncircumcised and the unclean: O, then the system is changed, then Zion means the church, Jerusalem the community of saints, and what else not? all, in short, except what the Bible evidently means. This, however, is the natural consequence of departing from the Law of God. If the gentiles, in forsaking their idols, had candidly said that they adopted those parts of the Bible which were obligatory on them, according to the well-established principle of Judaism, that they would honestly conform to the precepts of the children of Noah, but that unto the Israelites proper, their mission was as necessary as ever; that they were still bound by all the precepts of the law, and to them the prophetic future was indeed full of glory and greatness: all would have been well, the Israelites would have readily admitted the converts to the new moral system into their fellowship as proselytes so far as they went, without taking them into the full community of the synagogue, because this privilege is only for those who join themselves literally and fully to the congre-

gation of Jacob. But under such a system, Jews and gentiles could have lived happily together; the former, observing the whole of their duties, undismayed by fear or oppression, in the hope that a time would come when the power of the Lord would be made manifest to all creatures, when all men would receive an especial direction how to obey the will of God in the new state of things which is then to prevail. But the gentiles, in their new zeal, could not be so tolerant; they wanted to establish their adherence to God on a new basis, on one essentially differing from the standard of Israel; and hence, in taking the Scriptures as their guide, they had from necessity to abolish the literal sense of the words, because this indicted their views and contradicted their opinions at every turn. I could easily enlarge on the subject, and detain you for hours with references and proofs of what I say; but enough has been shown already to exhibit to you the manner of conducting the argument in the gentile way, and its entire unsoundness.

Whatever fancied reasons the opponents of Judaism may have to carry a spiritual, or rather an allegorical sense into the plain views of the Bible, it will not be satisfactory to any one who, either for the first time is made acquainted with the words of Scripture, as a child who has just learned to read, or a convert from a strange country who has not been biassed by either Jew or Nazarene, or to him who has learned to base Judaism upon what the Word teaches in its plain signification. So far do the Jewish authorities respect the simple expression of our sacred books, that notwithstanding the well-known propensities to allegorize, not rare among the Rabbis, all have laid it

down as a maxim אין מקרא יוצא מידי פשוטו "No verse goes out of its evident meaning;" which establishes clearly the principle, that however you may be emboldened to seek for hidden allusions in the word of God, however you may believe, and believe correctly, "One thing God hath spoken, two of these have I heard;" however you may be convinced that a deeper sense lies hidden under the outside of ordinary expressions, that the simple narratives point to higher and more mysterious thoughts: notwithstanding all this, the words employed mean in themselves only what they ostensibly mean, neither more nor less than what common sense would understand by them. I know that I may be met by the question as to what becomes then of the traditional expositions which we have received? But, indeed, they are all based upon the words of the Bible as they were understood at the time they were written. Reflect well that the original text of Scripture is not any longer the vernacular of any country; ages have passed since it has been merely a sacred dialect of our people. Consequently the very meaning of words depends upon traditional evidence; wherefore we must submit to be instructed from father to son as to what Israelites always believed they were commanded to do. I speak not now of the few rabbinical ordinances which are not founded on the Bible at all, as they are mere regulations made in the spirit of the Scriptures, and are not to be looked for in the words themselves; for instance, the lighting of the Hanukkah lamps, the reading of the *prayers* three times a day, and the like; for, although binding on all Israelites, they are not held up as absolute commands given us by Moses.—But, as regards the process of wresting

Scripture from its original sense, to make the words, after their plain sense has been developed, the vehicle for spiritual, hidden, mysterious, and, therefore, false deductions (for false they are, so soon as they clash with and contradict the evident dogmas of the Bible), it is undeniable that it can never claim to be authoritative with any one whose earliest infancy has not been imbued, and, therefore, corrupted by a process so unreasonable. For instance, say that Israel is not Israel, and that Zion is not Zion, it will be next to impossible to assign them any tangible and satisfactory meaning. I may contend, in the potency of my intellect, that Israel is put for Russia; another may claim it with equal right to be Japan or the distant isles of the sea. I may say Zion meant Rome; another will have the same right to find in Stamboul or London the mystical prototype of the ancient city of David. One may transform Jerusalem into the church, that is, his own peculiar form or mode of worship and belief; but, another may, with equal right, place his church on that same pedestal, and so claim it and himself to be the sole heirs of all the good that it is predicted for restored Jerusalem. It would be a curious chapter in theological controversy to hunt up all the mad exhibitions which such an unfounded system of interpretation has caused; one and the same place is called the modern Zion and Babylon by different sects; and for all Israelites can know or care, both assumptions are equally correct, for Rome is neither Zion nor Babylon, no matter how great her alleged virtues and how great her actual crimes. I only give you this specimen to put you on your guard against being confounded by the bold assurances oc-

casionally put forth that so and so the Bible teaches; allegory is the weapon of our opponents, spiritualizing is the sword with which they mean to slay Judaism; but admit nothing in argument which is not clearly deducible from the word of God, and hesitate not to reject as unsound any and every opinion, which is based upon no better authority than a mystical interpretation of words which you cannot yourselves discover in them.

We come now back to the proposition with which we started; and I think I have given reasons enough to make it clear, that the terms which were adduced signify literal Israel, and the literal habitations of our forefathers, when the terms meaning these ideas are employed. Now, as regards the other question, whether we occupy the same attitude towards God as at the time of the prophets, but few words remain to be said. We cannot deny that much and often have we been guilty of transactions which the law and the prophets condemn; or else Jerusalem would not have been destroyed a second time, nor would we have been again rendered fugitives from our land, and strangers in nearly all the countries of the earth. But, let us ask, how could we have improved our condition by changing wholly our faith? could we have become true to God, if, instead of being guilty not alone of the sins which destroyed our temple, we had also assumed a trinity for our god, abolished circumcision, changed the seventh-day Sabbath for the first day of the week, and neglected totally the festivals of the Lord, ate forbidden food as things permitted by authority of religion, and mingled freely in marriage with the nations of the earth? Say, would

these things have shown our adherence to God, our reconversion to the worship of the Most High? It is almost insulting to common sense to make such inquiries, their absurdity is too glaring to deserve even a serious refutation. But it is precisely on such grounds that the Nazarenes claim to occupy our ancient position; they assume to be the spiritual Israel, and have offended as such against the revealed word in the manner just indicated. What are to us their spirituality, their assumed holiness, their high claims to grace? have they not in their practices contradicted the Scriptures in every particular? And then, let us ask, which is true, the letter of the word or the assumed spirit? both cannot be true, this is certain, and it is for the word of God, as it reads, to decide between us and them. But, brethren, it has decided; there is no difficulty about ascertaining its meaning, which is the true spirit that breathes through it, and this says, "In all the way which the Lord your God hath commanded you, shall you walk; you shall not turn therefore to the right or to the left." I say, let this decide; and till the abolition of the Sabbath, circumcision, prohibitions, the festivals and other ordinances can be proved not to be a departure to the right or to the left, we cannot give our assent to a system which claims such sacrifices at our hands, not to mention that it demands before anything else the surrender of our faith in the blessed Unity, and to adopt in its place an association which the Bible emphatically prohibits and declares that it does not exist; for it teaches "that the Lord is the only God in heaven, and on earth there is none else." Hear ye! there is no one else; the words are אֵין עוֹד *Ane 'Od*, "there is

none else," simple, brief, comprehensive; excluding, therefore, any and every imaginable idea of another deity, independent of or associated with the sole and Almighty Creator, to whom be praise to everlasting. Though, therefore, we have sinned, though so many of us are entirely neglectful of God's teaching, we have not as a nation apostatized; we stand, therefore, on the same platform on which we were placed at our going out of Egypt; consequently, all the promises of the prophets, all the mercies predicted by command of God as reserved for Israel and Zion, must be expected to be fulfilled in us and our holy city; the former of which shall be restored whenever the time comes, and the latter of which shall be built up as an everlasting structure never more to be destroyed. Yea, God will come and dwell in the tabernacle of the daughter of Zion, whilst many nations will come to join themselves unto the Lord and be his people also; but not in detriment of, but in addition to the sons of Israel who have remained faithful and trusted in God that He would be true to his promise, and give them glory instead of ashes, and a joyful spirit instead of a grieved heart. May this be speedily fulfilled to our joy and the happiness of all the earth. Amen.

Kislev 29th. } 5610.
Decb'r 14th. }

DISCOURSE XX.

ISRAEL'S TRUE ALLEGIANCE.

O Eternal, our God! how powerful is thy name in all the earth, and everywhere are thanks offered up to Thee, and all creatures bow down before thy majesty. Yet Thou disdainest not to dwell in a house erected by the children of the dust, and it is thy will to accept of their humble services which cannot exalt Thee, in mercy and favour, if they exert themselves to obey thy will which Thou hast made known to them. And thus Thou provest thy goodness, since Thou bestowest the gift, and still blessest the instrument through whom thy august behests are accomplished. Come, then, O Father! into our assembly whenever we are met before Thee; sanctify what we do, accomplish what we intend, and strengthen us when we fail; so that our path of life may be even before us, and lead us from strength to strength, from the accomplishment of one good deed to the other, till we are seen before Thee in that heavenly Zion where no sin disturbs the faithful; where no tears dim the eyes of the mourners; where no care haunts the wanderer in the valley of the shadow of death; but where all is bright, all is truth, all is confidence, all is everlasting life. Yea, be Thou our Supporter on our right hand; be Thou our Protector in all our struggles; and grant that every trial of our faith may prove us truer and more confiding servants, who rely

on Thee only, who will listen to none but Thee, who will obey no law but that of thy ordaining, and who will invoke only Thee when living, and turn to Thee their dying eye, waiting for thy salvation, hoping for thy redemption, asking for thy aid only, to lead them beyond the power of death, as beseemeth the sons of thy servants whom Thou didst redeem to be thy people and thy heritage, the children of thy covenant, to whom Thou wouldst ever be God and Protector. Amen.

BRETHREN!

It is this Sabbath just a quarter of a century since this building was opened anew for the worship of the Most High, the God and Father of Israel. Many of those who then rejoiced that the goodly work had been accomplished have gone to their reward, and the cold grave now embraces many whose heart then beat with bright anticipations of a happy future, who stood there in the vigour of manhood and the pride of beauty; and others who were then young have advanced to old age, and their firm step is now changed to a trembling walk, and the light of their eye is dimmed, and daily they feel more and more that they have approached that period of their days in which they cannot enjoy the pleasures of social intercourse and the gayeties and frivolities of earlier years. The worldly fortunes, too, of many have since that day greatly changed; some have sunk into poverty and distress, or have by misconduct lost the high position they held in society; others, however, have acquired wealth and renown, and though then unknown they

are now among the honoured of the earth, and the smile of prosperity is seen in their dwellings. But, more still, a new generation has since then come into being, and a new race of believers has sprung from the loins of the faithful, and there are here many on that day unborn who glory in the name of Israel, and who are ready to carry yet farther the joyful message which our fathers heard at the foot of Mount Sinai, and they are willing to endure sorrows and hardship in the defence of the hope and faith of their ancestors. Tell me not that the age of enthusiasm is altogether past, and that the men of the present day are not capable to follow their God on the path of affliction which our fathers have trod; tell me not that the sincerity of Israel has departed forever, that nothing but interest and love of gain sway the mind of the people. There are evils, sore evils, besetting our onward march to improvement; we have fallen on evil times, when wealth is so highly valued, when interest so greatly sways the multitude. All this is true. Still there is life in Israel, there is a spirit in the sons of Jacob; the one may seem extinct, the other may appear dormant; but let danger once more threaten the sanctuary, let it once be noised abroad that an enemy lies in wait against the peace of our soul: and you will see thousands prepared to suffer, millions ready to sacrifice all, to sustain their faith in their Father who is in heaven. Thousands of swords will not indeed leap from their scabbards as though each blade were instinct with life, to dare everything for the religion of Israel as in the days of the valiant Maccabees, and in that awful struggle when deeds were wrought in the streets of Jerusalem which astonished

the world, when each arm was a tower, each body a fortress of strength; for now we are no longer endowed with carnal weapons; Israel wields not the sword and the spear, and moves not forward the engines of war to hurl death and destruction among its opponents. We are born to endure, and to resist the onward tide of desolation by the power of the spirit, by an endurance which nothing can overcome, which nothing can conquer; and it is this life and this spirit which dwell unseen within us, and they will be manifested whenever the sanctuary, the religion which we have obtained from Heaven, is threatened, whenever power shall combine, which God in his mercy avert, to rob us of that which we have received as the divine trust for all the sons of man from our God and Creator. And is there one here who doubts the issue? is there one who believes that Israelites—yea, the youths and maidens who have been born in this country, in this city, who worship in this house, who have sprung up within the past twenty-five years—would as a body prove recreant to their duty, would turn round like the faithless bow in the hand of the archer, and refuse obedience in the moment of trial? Ask your own hearts, brothers and sisters, look within you for an answer, and say with me that we will be true, let danger come when it may, and whence it may; that we will not listen to the voice of seduction, not quail before the outstretched arm of power, not fear the dungeon, nor dread the rack, but will sanctify the name of God with our latest breath, even as did our forefathers in the dark ages of persecution; and that our latest descendants shall not blush for their progenitors, when the glory of Israel shall dawn

over the earth, when nations shall walk in our light, and kings to the brightness of our shining.

And for what purpose do we raise synagogues, as houses of assembly for the sons of Israel? Is it to add to the architectural beauty of the cities in which we live? is it to gratify our eyes by the elegance of the structures which we have aided in erecting? Assuredly not; it is to dignify the worship of God, to establish unto his holy Name houses where we can meet to strengthen each other in the fear of the Lord and the observance of his commandments. Silently the servants of the Most High pray in solitude in the shadow of their own chambers, when first they enter a city or country. They are surrounded by those who honour not the Holy One of Israel; they bear within themselves in their residence the sole witnesses of the blessed Unity, whose praise will at one time fill the world. Anon others join the insignificant brotherhood; and those, who once perhaps denied their God from dread of being known as Jews, now come forward and claim affinity with their brothers; and speedily is heard the sound of the hammer, and the trowel is plied to put cement between the stones; and the roof is raised; the walls are plastered within, and there is a place provided for the law, the testimony descended to us from Horeb; and then the portals are thrown open for the entrance of the faithful, and the anthem swells on high, the roof resounds with the joyous acclaim; and "The Lord is One" is shouted forth amidst the deepest awe of feeling hearts, and all respond, "Blessed be the name of the glory of his kingdom forever and ever." And, behold, the work is thus accomplished, and the solitary, devout adorers

are solitary no more; and not in the privacy of their chambers do they now need to offer up their prayers; and the unfaithful need not now to hide their belief, because they are supported by those of moral courage and exalted hope, and there is established a home for the law of God, and a school of righteousness to invigorate the timid, and to convince the doubters of the truth and mercy of God. It matters not, then, so far as the truth is concerned, whether our places of meeting be large or small, ornamental or simple, provided only the proper spirit animates the founders, and whether after they have been opened, they are filled according to the number of the community with devout worshippers, with those who feel it a serious thing to be Israelites, who shrink not from the sacrifices which the observance of religion demands at their hands. With true devotion, in a full attendance of worshippers, is a small, plain building a proper place of residence for the Most Holy One; but if the worshippers be absent, or if they have no regard for the interests of their faith, if they merely come to show themselves on particular occasions, on some great festivity, or when something especial draws them thither—if such be the character of the people: the beauty, the spaciousness, and the elegance of the building are as nothing, but are a mockery rather of the Holy Spirit who alone can sanctify the work of our hands, whose acceptance solely can add any value to our worship, whose grace and mercy only can accomplish what we humbly commence. Truth and sincerity, humility and love, are the elements of consecration: let these be absent, and all the ceremonies, all the anthems, all the appeals of the endowed poet

and orator are in vain; they are a deceitful oblation, and the God of truth, the Fountain of sincerity, the Father of the meek, the perennial Spring of Love, will reject, will abhor what is so grudgingly given, what is offered up with so much of worldly deceit.

If thus it is the spirit of devotion which makes the synagogue a place of proper divine worship, it is necessary for us to seek how it may be obtained by us. The answer as usual can only be found in the Scriptures, and not in the philosophy and experience of the most learned. In the section of the law read to-day we find the following:

ויאמר ה' אל משה ואהרן זאת חקת הפסח כל בן נכר לא יאכל בו : שמות יב' מג' :

"And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the Passover-sacrifice, no son of the stranger shall eat of it." Exod. xii. 43.

To this verse say our commentators שנתנכרו מעשיו לאביו שבשמים וא' גו' וא' ישראל מומר במשמע, "Any one whose deeds have become alien to his Father in heaven; and this therefore does not merely exclude the gentile from participating in the Passover-sacrifice but the apostate Israelite also." We here see what sort of a man it is who is admitted to eat of the Passover-lamb, to wit, one whose deeds have made him acquainted with his Father in heaven, whose conduct has rendered him a proper inmate in the mansion of his God, and who feels not as a stranger when he enters his Master's house, nor is ashamed when mingling in acts of religion with his fellows in faith. The Passover-lamb,

as you well know, was first prepared by the Israelites in Egypt in the afternoon preceding the night of the slaughter of the first-born of their oppressors; the blood of the victim was sprinkled on the upper sill and the two door-posts of the houses of the Hebrews as a sign, so the Bible expresses it, that the destroyer should not be permitted to enter the dwellings of the Israelites, when he went forth to smite among the Egyptians. It may strike you here as curious, that such a sign was demanded; for you will ask: "Did not the messenger of the Lord know which was the house of the Israelite, without the few drops of blood of a slaughtered sacrifice which stained the door-posts?" Assuredly; there was no need for God to know by a sign the domicil of his people; nor did his messenger require this token to distinguish those whom he was to spare. For, though death was fearfully busy in that night, though thousands fell in a moment of time beneath the stroke of the unseen sword which was unsheathed in every house, in every prison where the oppressors dwelt, no harm befell those whom God protected; because He had promised to distinguish them in the hour of peril, because of the word announced to their fathers, that at the appointed time He would release them from thraldom, and humble those who had made them labour. It was therefore at present the business of Providence, so to say, to mark the true children of the covenant, to call their own attention to their descent and to the blissful promises for the future which awaited them: and accordingly we read, והיה הדם לכם לאת "And the blood shall be unto yourselves for a sign;" the Israelites should, on beholding the inside of their houses

marked with a token of their obedience, feel that they had now ceased to be under the authority of the cattle-worshipping Egyptians, seeing that they had slain in honour of their newly acknowledged God those animals which their old masters had adored; that they had entered on a new life, on a holier and better state of existence, in which the Lord of all creatures was their immediate God and King; and that if they confided in Him truly, they would be spared amidst all the afflictions which befell their oppressors. The verse then continues, וראיתי את הדם ופסחתי עלכם "And I will see the blood, and pass over you, and there shall not be among you a plague as a destroyer, when I smite in the land of Egypt." The protection is offered conditionally; only if they obeyed, should there be an exemption; from which we may infer that, had any one abstained from obedience, he would have forfeited his rights, and suffered with others not numbered among Israel. The exemption thus was, like other rewards, made to depend on a measure of obedience, and this removed at the same time all charge of partiality which the idolaters might have urged against the Holy One, by alleging that the Israelites too had worshipped the vanities of Egypt. But so soon as they stepped out from the trammels of the pollution into which they had been sunk; so soon as they adopted the Lord as their Master, and obeyed, without flinching from the danger they encountered by slaughtering the cherished objects of Egyptian superstition, they became worthy of the discriminating Providence which passed over their houses, whilst the cry of terror issued from palace and hovel, from temple and prison. The Egyptians had fre-

quently been summoned to obedience; they had learned that the Lord was greater than all the gods; they had been fearfully chastised in their houses and their fields; and still they ceased not to flatter Pharaoh in his obduracy, and induced him, if persuasion had been needed, to persevere in his contest against the power of the Omnipotent. Consequently, if such persistence in wrong-doing demanded punishment, they were justly dealt with; and if their victims, they who had so long groaned under their resistless cruelty, had entered upon a more religious life in the full sense of the words; if they had become willing to forsake the fertile homes of the Nile, which had become endeared to them through long residence and association, to travel away into the dreary wilderness without a store of provisions and water, burdened with numerous herds and flocks; laden with all their household goods, bound to look after the well-being of their wives and little ones; exposed also as they were to the attacks of the valiant and dreaded children of the desert, whose fiery war-horses rush quick as the lightning over the unsteady surface of the sandy plains, who are inured to rapine and plunder from their infancy, who spare neither the suckling, nor have mercy on the aged,—all this proved that they deserved not to be doomed indiscriminately with their masters; since they had acquired already a deep faith in the Judge of all the earth. And if we add now that the very ceremony they practised in the offering of their first national sacrifice must have been odious to their masters, as even Moses, the man without fear, had expressed but a little while before that such a deed would expose them to be stoned by the Egyptians:

the justice of the Lord is perfectly vindicated, since both nations had been invited to acknowledge and to obey the Almighty, and the one people resisted to the last, whilst the other yielded their assent to the revelations from Heaven. It was therefore that the blood became a token of merit, and obtained for those who had sprinkled it a release from the plague, the last and most terrible one of Egypt, and the destroyer entered not their houses to smite the first-born of Israel.

Let us now see what it was that accompanied the first Passover-sacrifice: it was obedience, faith, and a perfect reliance on the power and mercy of God. These qualities therefore procured for our fathers an exemption from slaughter; consequently we may infer that their absence would have exposed them at least to some punishment, if even the identical visitation which befell Egypt had not overtaken them. And as the thoughts of God are from their nature immutable, the same requisites as were demanded then must be required in all ages and times to constitute the character of a faithful Israelite. Whoever therefore is deficient in obedience to God's commandments, wanting in a full faith in the existence of the Unity whom we adore, and imperfect in a childlike trust in his mercy, cannot be a perfect child of God, and is not to the full extent a son of Israel as were the holy ones from whom we are descended; he may be one indeed in the flesh, a son of Abraham by descent; but he is an alien to our house in spirit, a changeling whom the fathers of our race will not recognize as their own. You will therefore easily understand the application of our text and the com-

ment thereon by our Rabbis. The Passover-lamb, eaten afterwards to commemorate the going out of Egypt, was a constant remembrancer of the great mercy wrought in our behalf at that eventful time; for "if our fathers had not been redeemed," so teach our sages, "then we and our latest descendants would have been servants to Pharaoh in Egypt," the truth of which proposition in its main features is exhibited at this day in the wretched state of the Pariah-caste among the Hindoos, to whose organization that of the Egyptian bore a close analogy. Whoever therefore was of Israel in the faith, whether native-born or adopted into the congregation, was permitted, nay, commanded, under the most fearful threats of divine vengeance, to eat of the sacrifice; still every בן נכר son of the stranger was excluded. It would almost betoken a contradiction in terms to forbid in one verse a descendant of the gentiles to join in our festivity, and to admit him in the next one almost. Wherefore our wise men have correctly understood the text; it does not in truth speak of a descent from Israel or others, but merely of the conduct, of the faith, the trust which the individual feels. If he is perfect in all, then let him come forward and partake of the Lord's Passover, he is one of the faithful, one of those who are welcome guests at the table of the Lord. But if he have made himself a stranger to his God, if he have sworn fealty to idols or associations; if he feel not burning within himself the undying love for the Unity who spoke unto Abraham, who revealed himself unto Moses, who alone passed in his irresistible might as the most Just and most Merciful through Egypt at that fatal midnight-hour, when there was no house in

which there was not some one dead—if he have no fellowship in thoughts, in words, in deeds with those who call alone on the unborn God, on Him who is All-powerful to save, who alone calls unto life, and dooms unto death—if he have turned his back upon his people, and sought the alliance of the stranger: what right has he, what business, to eat of the flesh of the sacrifice which itself was intended to gainsay and is a direct contradiction of all he professes and all he does? an apostate will claim to be of Israel? a traitor will ask the protection of his Sovereign? No —we know him not, we desire not his converse, his intercourse, we abhor him as a noxious reptile;—and our God! shall He accept of such a one as him, regard him as one of the faithful, one who is worthy to be called by his name? Forbid it justice, forbid it mercy; for it would be condemnation of the long and eventful struggle in which the Lord's servants are engaged, if the unclean and the apostates could claim spiritual affinity with them. No; these have made themselves outcasts by their own acts, and on them be the consequence. If they wish to belong again to the congregation of Jacob, let them repent, let them humble themselves, and by the blood of circumcision shall they be known as lineal descendants of Abraham; it shall be a sign to them that they are willing to devote themselves in the flesh to their Maker; and by the feeling of inmost faith shall their soul be purified, and He that searches the heart will accept of their repentance in mercy, and receive them in favour according to the abundance of his kindness. But till circumcision has sealed their flesh, till repentance has purified their spirit, let them not claim to be

children of God; for He has rejected them, and asks not, nay forbids, their service.

But, brothers, the Passover is but one of the commands of God, and it would be unaccountable were it to stand alone in a position by itself, unconnected with the other precepts and duties of religion. There is, moreover, no such isolation in our laws; for the whole is inseparably interlinked, and one idea supports the other. The same sanctification which the Passover demands, must be carried into the other parts of our faith; and without true belief, sincere conviction, and willingness to obey, no act of religion can be of any value. Outward obedience has indeed its importance, it is the ostensible token of the inward feeling; but in order to render it permanent, living, effective and influential on others, it must have its source in something more than habit, be better founded than upon a decent conformity to public opinion. Without conviction outward obedience is dead, fruitless, deceitful; with it, it is alive, spreading a wholesome influence around itself, beatifying the individual himself and others. Now, it is precisely such a sentiment which renders public worship of real and beneficent influence; we should assemble in synagogue, because it is God's house; we should pray to Him, because He is our Father, and will protect us when we sincerely ask his aid; we should listen to the lessons taught here, because they are the words of our heavenly King, the emanation of his wisdom, and the expression of his will in regard to what we should do and what we should omit; and whilst here, it should not be as though we were constrained and restless visitors, who only anxiously await the moment of their

dismissal, but our attention should be fixed from the moment we enter till the moment we leave. In brief, we should be devout outwardly, decorous, as before a human sovereign; but we should be more yet, sincere, truly, inwardly devotional, because we stand before the Searcher of hearts, who cannot be deceived by us through means of our outward profession, whilst the soul is dead, the mind is wandering, and the heart is rebellious. No;—truth and righteousness consecrate the synagogue; the walls are perishable, worthless things, if decorated with the gold of Ophir and the jewels of India; but the tent of cloth becomes the residence of the Holy One, if the spirit of the assembled is of one faith and obedience, if they come together to glorify their God, not merely to please their ear, and to gratify their fancy.

You have thus before you what the Lord demands of each of us when we dedicate to Him a house of prayer; He, then, asks of us to be entirely his, and to know of no truth which He has not himself declared. Outward tokens must have an inward meaning; and if this be absent, He asks us, in the tones of the severest rebuke, "Who required this at your hand to tread down my courts?" Let us hope, then, that the erection of so many synagogues in this land is an evidence of the true spirit; that they demonstrate that the people who come thither to worship are willing to brave everything, if need be, to prove themselves worthy descendants of the Patriarchs, those glorious names which shine like a bright sun in the sky of history.—And you, my own immediate hearers, how can you respond to the question? are you entire with your God? are you willing to suffer, to labour

for the cause of your faith? Then rejoice that you have been spared to see this day, when so many years have elapsed since the opening of this house, to renew here your inward declaration of fealty to your God, for whose honour and glory you then erected this building to the Lord One, "who is alone the Hope of Israel," מקוה ישראל ה'; rejoice that your numbers have increased notwithstanding that some have thrown off the yoke, and mingled, through sin and backsliding, with the transgressors and the nations of the earth; rejoice that their absence is not felt, and that we have gone on growing stronger and stronger, notwithstanding the enemies of God have predicted the speedy extinction of Jacob's sons; and rejoice that it is your privilege to aid in the spread of the word of God, and to maintain it in its purity in those who are to come after you. And if you thus feel strengthened in the Lord, if you are indeed entirely his own: then let us pray that his spirit may come among us all, and breathe into active life the spark of truth that is glowing within us, that it may spread abroad to the East and the West, the South and the North, to conquer ourselves and others to be true subjects to our King in heaven, whose Name be praised from everlasting. Amen.

Shebat 5th. } 5610.
Jan'y 18th. }

DISCOURSE XXI.

THE MOSAIC LEGISLATION.

Thou, who art the most Just and Merciful! have regard to the cause of thy children, and bless and preserve them from the dangers that continually threaten them. Be with them in their daily toil, and prosper their undertakings; and when they engage in the study of thy holy law, give them understanding, that they may comprehend fully what Thou hast taught, and be able to oppose successfully the knowledge of thy precepts against the vain appeals of sinful men. Teach them to distinguish what Thou lovest, from what thy spirit hateth, and make the acquisition of a livelihood easy for them, that they, having the means of sustenance from thy all-bountiful hand, may have the leisure to inquire after thy instruction, and stand before the world as valiant defenders of thy truth, and as those who need not cringe before their fellow-mortals because of the benefits they receive from them. Be with them in their going out and their coming in; bless them in the city and the field, and be a protection round about them, by letting thy spirit dwell in their midst, to render productive their toil, and to make fruitful their virtuous resolves, that they may live to merit thy grace and be a blessing to others, even as Thou blessest them. Amen.

Brethren!

If one listens to the arguments of infidels, he might

be led to suppose that of all the impositions and deceptions practised on mankind by the designing, the knavish, and the ambitious, the religion of Moses holds the first rank. They fancy, or pretend to do so, that the Pentateuch is a system of arbitrary restrictions, onerous in its nature, and inconvenient in practice, and that a free man might justly pass his private judgment upon it, and reject it in part or entirely, as his pleasure may dictate. This idea is carried out practically every day before our eyes, and men, and these Israelites, those who are by birth at least inheritors of Heaven's legacy, act and speak as though the law were a fiction, and Moses the chief of impostors instead of the father of the prophets. And still those who thus show themselves unworthy of their descent, have perhaps never understood what Moses was, and what he taught; they only look upon themselves as restricted by his dicta, and unjustly circumscribed in their pleasures and pursuits by his unwelcome and inopportune injunctions, without at all reflecting on what they themselves have obtained, and what the world has acquired through his instrumentality. I will not dwell upon the miracles which attested to his contemporaries the truth of Moses; because, in the first place, they can be no ocular evidence to us; and then, secondly, these are the very things which the unbelievers deny. Nor, what is more, does the law depend upon the existence and performance of miracles for its authenticity, but simply upon its being the emanation of the Supreme Power הגבורה, as our learned men term the Deity, which fact, though itself the greatest miracle, greater far than any one alleged to have been wrought at the going forth from

Egypt, is capable of a more direct proof, than any of those acts of power and justice executed on Pharaoh and his guilty people. The Nile no longer flows seaward in a bloody stream; the hail and the lightning's fire no more descend to the earth in thy midst, O Memphis! in thy royal courts, O Zoän! nor does the shriek of despair, wrung from anguished hearts, from bereaved mothers, from suddenly rendered widowed wives, from despairing children, re-echo from every street and every house, as in the night when the first-born fell before the sword of the unseen Avenger; nor does the Red Sea stand up cleft in twain like two icy walls, displaying the deep abyss as though it were dry land, the habitation of living man; nor now blazes thy summit, O holy Sinai! because the Lord thy Creator has descended on thee in fire; thy rocky head is not now enveloped in smoke, and thou shakest not because of the mighty Presence that has pitched his pavilion on thy summit; the trumpet sounds not now loudly in the hearing of millions, and they stand not awestruck, anxious for the coming word which to hear they have been led hither. All these things have passed away; the traces are no longer visible to prove that they ever were enacted; the very identity of the spot where the Red Sea was passed by the Israelites is lost; the identity of Sinai even is a matter of uncertainty, and no monument marks the sacred spots where the great deeds were wrought which fill our hearts with admiration and our soul with love for the Great and Holy One who was ever mindful of our low estate, and forgot us not in our affliction. But the *word* itself does remain, it is here with us this day, there in yonder ark, there wherever Israelites

dwell, in every tongue, in every writing, in every dialect; no less than in the sonorous language which our fathers spoke in their own land, that in which they heard the words when first they burst upon a startled world; it is wherever the child of Abraham is met, on the ocean and in the desert, in the city and the field; there where he is afflicted, writhing under the power of tyranny, and there too where sweet freedom smiles at him, and allures him with her bland looks on the path of ambition and preferment; it is wherever many are assembled in the name of the All-Father, and even where one sits down to peruse the instruction which his God and the Lord of the world has delivered into his keeping. Yes, it is universal in time and place; and hence I say it is, though the greatest of all the miracles, the one most susceptible of proof; since it exists, in all its activity and beauty, as on the day, the moment it was called forth into existence, and became incorporated with the vast creation as a portion of itself, as the governing principle of the human intellect, the standard of equity, justice, and mercy.

Moses may have been ambitious; but ambition is no crime, if its object is to benefit mankind; and we are yet to learn that the great leader of Israel ever wished to make the sword the arbiter between nations, or that he desired to gain the smallest advantage for himself and his own household. Moses was designing if you will; but his design was not to fasten chains on the limbs of his species, and to make them willing tools of his pleasures, or obsequious servants to his will. Moses established a priesthood, a priest-power, if you will insist on the term; but the priest-

hood was to be the servant of the people; it was composed of the paid, salaried officers of a church-government, we will admit; but their emoluments were, nevertheless, entirely dependent upon the pleasure and humour of those who had the sacred gifts to bestow, and no single priest could claim from any individual Israelite, as his just perquisite, the very portions of the holy things which he was himself not allowed to consume for his own use. Moses invoked the vengeance of God on those who neglected or countervened his doctrines; it is true, he wished to impose mental terrors in addition to the arm of political power, which he established to restrain evildoers; but it was for a higher aim than merely to engender superstitious fears of unseen harmless things, invented to fetter the intellect, and to enslave the understanding; and he sought to place virtue, integrity and truth on a more elevated position than a mere submission to civil power, where all is resolved into the simple fear of punishment, which society must inflict if one makes himself amenable to its vengeance by committing an injury on others, and becoming hurtful to his neighbours, or prevents the accomplishment of some public good by a refusal to assist according to his means; when those whom he injures are either bound to restrain his wrongdoing, or to coerce him into compliance. Moses, I say, wished to place his followers on a higher platform than such motives of action; he laid before them thoughts which they should make their own; feelings which they should incorporate with their very being; ideas not derived from fear and interest; for he held up to them that, if even the civil rulers be satisfied,

there was a higher, a holier, a more watchful Head of the state whose demands must be heeded; and that every act should be performed, because this Supreme Ruler in his commonwealth asks of all his subjects that they should exercise justice, mercy, and truth toward one another, because He himself is distinguished by these attributes, inasmuch as He decides everything according to the strictest rule of universal equity; He pardons the repentant, because He wills to forgive and not to destroy the offending child; and He is the very essence of undefiled truth, as no deceit, no error, no uncertainty can by any possibility be conceived as combinable with the idea of his perfection.

Let us now see what was the state of the civilized world before the time of Moses. We have here to deal for the most part with conjectures, as written records are wanting, because we know of none which claims a priority to the Pentateuch. We may assume, therefore, that before it no written code of laws was known to man; and that hence all justice was left to the arbitrary decision of those in power, wherefore the weak and helpless had no means of redress and no resource but submission to their hard fate. As we find it in Egypt and India, it was probably in other countries; indeed, traces of the fact are evident in Roman and Grecian history, that the people were divided into classes or castes, and that those who belonged to the lowest or labouring classes could not attain to the positions of honour, dignity, and offices, which were the heritage of the priestly and military ranks. Nay, more; we need not go so far down into antiquity and among the heathen to search for analogies to support the position I have assumed; for even now, in Russia

and Poland, and within memory of the present generation in other parts of Europe, there is or was a class of nobles, who by a prescriptive right had a large portion of all the territory of the state, and an immense majority of the people as absolute and abject slaves, amenable to their will and pleasure. If all this has been and is existing still, after so many struggles have been witnessed to recover the rights of man from the unjust possessors of power; if all the revolutions which the world has seen have left so much to be done: how dreadfully abased must have been the condition of the masses in the day of our legislator, when kingcraft and priestcraft were able to forge such chains, such galling bonds as bound, body and mind, our fathers in Egypt. Recollect, brothers! that Jacob and his sons and their children went down into that country as the welcome and invited guests of the king who then ruled in the land of the Nile; that it was he who had assigned to them possessions in the district of Goshen, who had promised that they should eat the fat of the land, wherefore he had bidden them to leave, without thought or care, their goods and chattles in Canaan. Jacob and his sons were freemen; heroes on whose limbs no chains were fastened, whose arms were not entwined by the bonds of the tyrant, whose arm wielded the sword and the bow in the defence of their just rights; recollect, too, that one of them, the wise Joseph, had by his inspired knowledge saved the country from the affliction of a seven-years' famine, which otherwise might have destroyed millions of human beings, and rendered the land a howling waste. And yet barely had the fathers fallen asleep when their pilgrimage was ended, than

the new ruler not only did not continue the kindness and hospitality which his predecessor had voluntarily promised, but also conspired with the men of his own race to subdue and diminish the foreign immigrants, by reducing them to a state of absolute bondage and involuntary labour. How great must have been the power of the sovereign when such an act of injustice could be consummated, when such cruelty could be carried into effect, without a rebellion of the very instruments relied on for carrying out the cruel and pitiless resolve!

I merely sketch you a picture, and leave you to fill up the outlines; and you will easily understand that, if the wisest nation of antiquity had either no written laws or such as concentrated all power into the hands of one man, who was the head of the priesthood no less of the army, the owner of the land and the fountain of all favours and emoluments in the state: how abject, how low, how degraded must have been the condition of those people who stood upon a point of civilization very far beneath the Egyptians. What now was the procedure of Moses? did he invent a new system of philosophy to enlighten his people? did he contrive a new chain of mysteries in which his followers should be initiated in order to belong to the fraternity, united by peculiar statutes and privileges inaccessible to all others? No such thing; he did not teach any philosophy, he did not dwell on the nature of the Deity, he did not attempt to reconcile to human understanding what must ever remain incomprehensible to a finite being; nor did he surrender to a chosen few especial mysteries and peculiar signs and ceremonies by which they might know each other,

and thereby have a sort of ascendancy over all the rest of their associates. But, on the contrary, he came out boldly with the declaration that the God whom he adored was an everlasting Being, too high, too powerful, too wise, too holy, too far removed from aught that is corporeal, to be comprehended by the finite creatures who are mere sojourners in this God's world; that accordingly there was no mystery which one man could solve, and which remained concealed from the other; and that all, since they had one origin, and one ultimate destiny, had also, whilst in life on the earth, one and the same line of conduct to pursue; and hence resulted, as a matter of necessity, a uniformity of laws for all, based upon their relation to the God who had created them alike, although each human being might have different capacities, mental powers, or worldly possessions. An absolute physical and mental equality was not predicated as the basis of Moses's teaching, because this equality does not and never did exist. But for all this all men are alike in this, that they all derive their origin from the will of the same God, are alike objects of his care, are alike within his cognizance, and alike responsible to Him, if any responsibility is at all to be imagined as existing in the affairs of the world.—This being the case, how was the equality of which we speak to be secured, not merely in theory, but in practice also? how was the superintendence which Moses in person gave to his incipient state, how was his wisdom with which he governed so many myriads of unrefined men, just dismissed from slavery, to be perpetuated for after-generations?—By a simple contrivance, by an effort which, easy as it may appear, bears never-

theless the stamp of the highest miraculous power of the Godhead, because it actually accomplished, and does so to this very day, all the requisites we have just stated. It was, in brief, a written code of laws, which should govern alike all who were citizens of the state, whether they were natives, or strangers seeking a home, or sojourning among the successors of the patriarchs, and confer no privileges on a class nor exclude any one from an equal benefit of the favours of the state, as on the other hand no one could claim any exemption from the public burdens; the rich were not to be allowed to exercise any injustice towards the poor; nor should these, on the plea of their necessitous position, withhold from the wealthy what was of right their due, or take from them by force and violence, or artifice and cunning, what they had acquired by honest industry and skilfulness well applied.—In what light does this present to us the first leader of Israel? as an impostor? as a cunning plotter against the liberties and rights of man? as a conspirator against the development of the intellect and the progressive march of reason?—On the contrary, we behold in him the assertor of the highest enlightened liberty, of freedom secured and restrained by wholesome laws, as a teacher of the purest morals, as the father of a code in which each man can find his place, and a strict assignment of duties and rights which belong to him in quality of being a member of the commonwealth and as a subject only to the Supreme Ruler, who is the Head of the state as He is also the Proprietor and Grantor of all the property and wealth held, as it were, in trust by individual members for the benefit of all the community, be

they high or low, rich or poor. It is at last the evidence of the greatest amount of freedom in a country, that each one residing in it is within the reach and under protection of the law; and far as society has hitherto progressed, by the march of invention and scientific discovery, greatly as experience has taught mankind; much blood as has been shed in making the experiments in the art of governing and contriving constitutions, no less the written than the traditional,—no greater discovery has been made in the art of government than Moses has left us in his code which has been in our possession more than thirty centuries, which was obtained without bloodshed, without violent debates, without overturning ancient vested rights, and which has stood the test of ages without change or amendment.

If you will read in connexion the promulgation of the Ten Commandments with the subsequent revelation of the Most High as described by Moses, you will find that the first object of the legislation was the establishment of a civil government composed of men all equal under the law; and hence, barely was the basis of our law placed within our reach, than we meet with the following injunction:

ואלה המשפטים אשר תשים לפניהם : שמות א' כא' :

"And these are the laws of justice which thou shalt lay before them." Exod. xxi. 1.

In the simple commandments of the Decalogue the Lord had purposed to point out to the people their relation to Him, and to teach that all the ideas of divine things, as acquired by them in their former

country, were all erroneous and injurious to them if carried out into practice. A few general principles as to individual rights had also been imparted; but they were not yet in possession of a system of government, in which these general rules could be successfully applied. Hence the first idea to be accomplished was to adapt the Decalogue to practical life. And now see, instead of organizing as the first object of the Lord his system of worship, the manner in which He desired to be adored, He merely proposed laws for the establishment of equity and order among his redeemed people, and to enable them to know their respective positions in the commonwealth, under every possible circumstance. It would detain us too long to examine into the nature of every special enactment, and to point out its relative superiority over the arbitrary laws, the invention of individual men, or the resolves of deliberative assemblies, where compromise and mutual concession not rarely rule the mind, not absolute notions of right and wrong. But take yourselves the trouble to institute a comparison between them and those laws with which you happen to be acquainted, and I am sure you will acknowledge that the Code of Israel, or if you will prefer, the Code of Moses, contains more provisions to secure one man against the violence and malevolence of the other, than the constitution of the freest government ever devised by mortals. And thus it happened as much by a rational result from physical causes as by divine interposition, that the Israelitish state flourished as such whenever the people strictly obeyed the law given through Moses. Their land was fertile, because the tillage was carried on on rational grounds; the soil, resting every

seventh year, had an opportunity to recover from the loss of its vigour, which a continuous tillage naturally produces. The remission of debts enabled the poor man to regain his independence, which a condition of constant subjection to a heartless creditor is but too apt to undermine, and thus divide the population into nobles and plebeians, into the higher classes and the vulgar, into lords and serfs. This equalizing principle was farther aided by the absolute injunction against perpetual servitude of the members of the commonwealth, especially that of the Hebrew woman, who could claim her freedom if not espoused by the man who had purchased her labour for a time, or if he betrothed her not to his son, in which case of marriage she became fully and to all practical purposes his wife, with all the rights and privileges belonging to that state among the Israelites: whilst at the same time the Hebrew man was free at the end of six years, and if he preferred the easy service to his master to a home of his own, he was compelled to go at large in the year of the jubilee, and rejoin his family-circle, restored as he then was to the patrimony which either his faults or misfortune had compelled him to alienate. Whilst, then, the people obeyed faithfully the law, their land was fertile, their sons were free, their daughters were virtuous; there was union in council, and vigour in the field; each man had his home, for which he was to strike in the hour of danger; his wife, his little ones, were in his mind's eye, whilst the tents of the enemy whitened the plain before him; and he thought of the house of his God, where sat assembled the venerable sages in whose hands was intrusted the happiness of the commonwealth and

the guardianship of the rights and interests of all; and he felt himself invincible, he forgot all danger, and even if he fell, he knew that those dear to him were left as a sacred legacy to his countrymen, and that moreover the God of the widow, the Guardian of the fatherless, would not forsake those who were cast on his mercy.—But when Israel rebelled, when they tilled the land to exhaustion, when they would not lend except on usury, when they forced their brothers and sisters into slavery, into hopeless servitude,—our glory departed from us; the land became barren; the spirit of independence departed, and past was the virtue of their daughters, fled the bravery of their sons; and corruption sat in high places, and injustice presided in the courts assembled in the precincts of the defiled house of God. It was then that the enemy came and prevailed, wherever he showed his hated presence; and when the prophet Jeremiah, in his thirty-fourth chapter, had once more begged of his brothers to return to the simplicity of the law with an assurance that national prosperity should return, and when he was not heeded, when the rebellion continued to augment: the Chaldeans were left at liberty to overthrow finally our state, and then was the law of Moses vindicated, and it was proved that not he had indited the words, but that they were the emanation of the Supreme Wisdom, of the God who creates the spirit, and whose are the knowledge and understanding.

Let us lay the result of our sad history before the unbeliever, let us show him the analogy between our sinning and our downfall, and we need not fear but that he must acknowledge the beauty and truth of

our religion. But let us also prize it, as the treasure which is so good and so holy, and let us by observing it endeavour to earn the favour of its Divine Bestower, to whose Name be praise and glory forevermore. Amen.

Shebat 26th. } 5610.
Feb ry 8th. }

DISCOURSE XXII.

THE PASSOVER CEREMONIES.

O Lord, God of our fathers! we thank Thee for the many favours which we have received from Thee, both as a nation and as individuals. In times long gone by, when we groaned under the iron yoke of a Pharaoh, thy ears were open to our cries, and Thou didst send thy messenger to break our chains and to let us go free, redeemed from slavery, called to thy service. And when nation after nation rises against us to blot out our name from the memory of men, Thou dost interpose thy holy arm, and snatch us away from the midst of the destruction, like a firebrand from the midst of the burning. And daily do we receive thy bounty; hourly do we taste thy goodness, inasmuch as Thou art good to all, opening thy hand and satisfying the desire of every living thing. Bless us, then, also this day with the abundance of thy mercy; give us the aid we need; gladden our hearts with thy salvation, and fill our souls with thy goodness; do this

for the sake of thy holy Name, which rests upon us. Amen.

BRETHREN!

On the subject of the festival which we now celebrate, we read the following:

והיה כי יאמרו אליכם בניכם מה העבדה הזאת לכם : ואמרתם זבח פסח הוא לה' אשר פסח על בתי בני ישראל במצרים בנגפו את מצרים ואת בתינו הציל : שמות יב' כו' כז' :

"And it shall come to pass, when your children say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that you shall say, It is a sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses." Exodus xii. 26, 27.

In these few words we have the key to the whole ceremonial law of Israel, which embraces all the observances commanded by God to Moses, many of which were written down in the book of the law which he handed to the priests and Levites before his death: while others again, that is, the *manner* of the observances, were given as oral explanations of the written text, and were, for a long time, preserved by tradition from father to son, and thus formed a constant theme for instruction from parent to child, from the teacher to his scholar. From our text, we can readily see what the Lord intended by the institution of the ceremonies, namely, the perpetuation of the lesson taught at the time of the Exodus. We have had several times, in the course of our lectures, occasion

to state that, by the triumph which the Divine Power obtained over the obstinacy of men who recognized not its existence as residing with the Most High, it established, at the time mentioned, the fact which had been acknowledged by some righteous few from the very beginning of the creation, that the Being who announced himself as the God of the ancestors of the Israelitish people was indeed the Lord of all existing things, the Creator and Author of the universe. It must be evident to you, that to have merely redeemed our fathers from Egypt, and to have given them some abstract doctrinal rules, would have resulted precisely as the earlier revelations and miracles had done—a momentary effect would doubtless have been produced, but the result would have been what it had been before, that mere doctrines could not have survived the changes which time brings about in everything. We do not say that the Lord could not have prevented this evil if He had purposed to do so; that by his omnipotent power He could not have removed the inclination for sin from every heart at one and the same moment, and have made his power acknowledged by every son of man. But this procedure would, as one can easily see, have destroyed every species of freedom of will, have abolished, in fact, a principal ingredient in the constitution of man, the liberty of choosing between good and evil, seeing that he was constrained by a force from above to embrace opinions, which otherwise he might have rejected as unsuited to his views. That such a state of mankind might be a happier one than as we now find it, may or may not be; it is not for us to decide upon the measures of government which proceed from the

highest Wisdom. Enough for our purpose that this change of the human heart did not take place at the Exodus, and it has not to this day been witnessed in the world, though we cannot determine whether it will not occur at some future day; at least the words of prophecy seem to indicate that at the time of our second redemption a more ready obedience to the law will characterize the people of Israel, and that the covenant of the Lord will be inscribed in their heart, so that it may never again be broken. But still these promises, for which you can see many passages in the Prophets, especially Jeremiah and Ezekiel, do not so much indicate a determination on the part of the Deity to remove the freedom of the human will, as an annunciation that the Divine Spirit will aid those, who have remained faithful during the ages of trial in captivity, to fulfil the desire of their heart, that is, to obey the law which they had believed in before the pouring out of the Spirit, with a more exact compliance than when they had to struggle, so to say unaided from above, against the power of sin. Be this, however, as it may, at the time of the Exodus, as we have said, a change of the human heart was neither contemplated nor did it take place. The Lord meant only to teach man just as he was, sinful, ignorant, prone to evil; and whatever change was requisite, should be the slow effect of time, proceeding, as everything else in nature, from a certain beginning to an equally fixed termination.

How then should the doctrines of the law become the standard of thought to mankind? If human philosophy had perchance made the discovery of the Decalogue, if by any possibility any one of the sages of

antiquity had possessed himself of the mighty engine by which more and more, from age to age, the human family has submitted itself to be governed: he would doubtless have instituted especial guardians of the mighty mystery; appointed a body of men who were alone intrusted with truths so profound, who then could at pleasure have communicated their knowledge by slow degrees to their hearers; and at length, as everything human is liable to corruption, designing successors might have added to it or diminished from the original truth, and substituted such doctrines as comported best with their own political aggrandizement. What other method, in fact, could a man adopt? how could he reach the ears of many except through many deputies? how could he preserve his ideas except through faithful disciples? how could they make themselves felt except through political influence? And yet it must be clear to you, that the masses could not thus be reached, except by violent arbitrary restrictions, or else by too slow degrees ever to be universally affected; and suppose even that a whole people, or, say if you will, many nations, had become adherents to the new philosophy, the effect of so much labour, of so much time, of so many hopes, of so many cares, must have been dissipated by the destruction of the political system to which it was necessarily united; for there was or could be nothing in the foresight of man to bind the spirit, when there was no longer a common outward symbol or political associations with which it was closely connected. Those acquainted with the history of nations can easily cite examples for themselves; but as it is not our province to make quotations from its pages, we

must content ourselves with mere allusions, with the single assurance that the recorded facts amply bear out our assertions.

If the Lord had acted now as man acts, his religion would not have all at once become the standard of a whole people; mysteries, learned castes, exclusive knowledge, confined to a limited number of priests, are the very reverse of universal acquaintance with ideas; and we have shown before this that it had necessarily been the design of the Most High to establish a universal religion. How then should He do? Should He proclaim abstract ideas merely? Should He teach a pure philosophical system, embracing the belief in one God, the immortality of the soul, accountability after death, fraternal and neighbourly love, filial obedience to parental authority? Do you think that such a system could have stood for one generation, at a time when the greatest sages believed in a multiplicity of gods; when many had no conception of anything but matter; when artifice, cunning and oppression were more practised than the kindness towards the neighbour, which is the universal maxim of revealed religion? Think you that an abstract morality, such as we have sketched, could have been introduced at all without bringing the recipients thereof at once into contact and collision with the erring multitude, or, in case no collision took place, that the contest would not have been speedily followed by a deterioration of the true believers? If human experience is worth anything, either of the cases would assuredly have occurred, either contest with the heathens around, or in mingling with them, a forgetfulness of the new faith, mind you, faith

divested of acts, would necessarily have ensued. Let us, therefore, admire the wisdom of the Lord, who, by a simple contrivance, which never could have proceeded from human intellect uninstructed by Him, furnished the means of separating his chosen servants, to whom He had made known the truths which He contemplates to uphold, so that they might be forever distinguished from all other nations by the belief in the unity of the Lord, which they had received at their first coming out from Egypt. And this contrivance is the ceremonial law, containing ordinances and rules of conduct, which should be peculiarly the inheritance of Israel, which should be the same in the infancy of their state, when it was at the height of splendour, and when the people should have been broken up as a nation, and be wanderers in every land, aliens in every country under the sun, and then also when the light of freedom should shine upon them in distant countries, and they be members and citizens of communities, the greater part of which do not accept the legislation of Sinai as their code of laws.

We will confess that the ceremonies in themselves are of minor importance, if compared with the great principle of our faith, the belief in the Deity. But if we look upon them as emanations of this God, as the declaration of his will, as the means of effecting a high and holy end, they are no longer unmeaning observances; they rise into dignity, they become equally important with the social duties; they present themselves to us, in fact, as the guardians of the acknowledged high principles, the adoration of God and the love of our fellow-men, and consequently they merit and should receive our profoundest respect and

veneration. Among the ceremonies we reckon the festivals, the sacrifices, the temple-service, and all those peculiar domestic rites and prohibitions which distinguish us from other nations.

The first among the festivals is the weekly Sabbath. At a time when unmitigated tyranny was the lot of thousands of bondmen, when their task was never ended, when their toil terminated at the setting of the sun, only to be resumed at his rising,—this ceremonial institution at once bound the son of Israel to a peculiarity of conduct, that he might have every week one day to think over the mighty work of the creation, to impress on his mind the truth of the existence of the Creator, to remind him that he had been a slave in Egypt, and to admonish him to have mercy on his bondman, on him who from poverty or misfortune was compelled to seek service under his roof, in his field, or in his vineyard, on him whom the fate of war had placed a captive under his absolute dominion, on him in whose bosom the feeling of freedom had never found a home: so that in all the land of Israel there might be a solemn universal rest, when the task of the unfortunate should be ended, when the master and his slave, the victor and the captive, the rich and the poor, the young and the old, the king and the subject, all—all—should come and worship the Adorable Father, the Almighty Power, who had announced himself as the One, the sole Creator and Ruler of the universe.

The Sabbath was to be a part of the code by which a great truth should be perpetuated; it was to be a characteristic of our race, a weekly jubilee for all those living under the rule of our law; and even

when our state was dissolved by the rude hand of conquest, this gift could not be taken away with the temple when it sank down a heap of blackened ruins, and it has survived, yes, this ceremonial act of worship has survived races of conquerors, who despoiled us of our land, our homes, our freedom; it has seen their empires crumble one by one; it has seen the besom of destruction pass over Asshur, Babel, Greece, and Rome; it has seen system after system rise from nothing, and sink into forgetfulness; creeds have been professed, deities been invented, and given place to other creeds and other gods: and yet it, this blessed Sabbath, the wise enactment of an all-wise Father, has kept alive his pure belief in our midst, and to this day the sons of Israel resort, with their wives and their little ones, in all the places of their dispersion, to the houses dedicated to the One God, and proclaim in the word of their great teacher their abiding faith in his existence, their adherence to his Law. And when the little child sees the lamp lighted on the eve of the Lord's day; when he beholds the quietness of the household, the neat array of everything around him; when he sees all business suspended, and feels the pressure of the hand of his parents laid upon his innocent head, with the wish that he may become like the sons of the Patriarch, that he may be blessed by the Lord, preserved from evil, receive heavenly light and grace, the bestowal of the bounty of the Supreme and that peace which has no ending,—do you not think that, little as he is, he will feel the solemnity of the occasion, that his heart will bound with joy, and know already thus early that there is something holy to live for, a destiny which is worthy of a life's labour

to attain? Oh, how guilty, therefore, are they who do not love the Sabbath, who do not go to the house of God, who prefer the gain of a day of labour to the rest of the soul, to the renewal of the divine rule within their heart! How can they teach their children to worship, when they themselves love not God, when they themselves bend before a golden idol of their own making? How can they expect the divine blessing on their labour, if they seek it not by a compliance with the dictates of his law? And yet the Sabbath is a beautiful creation of the God of Israel! He sanctified it, He blessed it, He preserved it untouched amid a thousand vicissitudes, amidst difficulties almost insurmountable; and to this day it has lost none of its efficacy, it strengthens the soul, it reinvigorates the body, and when the sun has gone down, when the twinkling stars proclaim that a day has elapsed sacred to the Lord: how sweetly will the hours of labour then come again unto us; and when morning dawns anew, the labour of the tiller of the soil will be full of new vigour, and the hammer of the artisan will fall with more force, all for having reposed one day because it was the time devoted to God, to worship and adore in his holy precincts.

Next in order is the Passover, the festival, the recurrence of which we celebrate at this season. When our fathers dwelt in Egypt, they were subjected to all the maltreatment which arbitrary tyranny could invent; children were snatched from the embrace of mothers, ere yet their eyes had scanned the loved features of their tender offspring. Stripes were the share of men who did not fulfil the task imposed by exacting masters; they laboured in works which brought them no

gain, and tilled fields from the produce of which they might not eat. Chiefs of their tribes, no less than ordinary men, were subject to the same indignities, and all were alike in the common degradation which had overwhelmed the children of Jacob. It was then that the Lord of Justice appeared in his glory, demanding the liberation of the children of his adorer; and when his power was denied by the oppressor, He made himself manifest by deeds which the Supreme alone could produce, and the chains of the captives were broken, the haughty were humbled to the dust, and the shores of the Arabian Gulf resounded with the song of triumph of thankful redeemed tens of thousands. To keep this event fresh in the memory of all who claim their descent from Israel, particular ceremonies were instituted, calculated from their very peculiarity to arrest the attention of the young, and to induce them to inquire of their sires for the meaning of what they see. In the times when Moriah's hill was crowned with the glorious structure to which our tribes did flock at all the festive seasons, the sacrificial lamb was slain as at the first celebration of their anticipated redemption. But now, when our sins have deprived us of this common home, we yet keep the commemoration, though in less splendour than in days of old. Still even now there are many things in a proper Jewish household, as the preparatory purifications, the baking of the unleavened bread, the order of the domestic celebration wherein old and young should join, and the assembling at the houses of prayer to thank again and again the Lord, because that He is good and that His mercy endureth forever, to induce the intelligent child to ask of his parents, "What

mean you by this service?" and well may they answer: "It is a sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses." For in truth all the ceremonies which we yet observe are the legitimate remainder of the institutions which were first given to us; they are the sacrifices which Israel bring in captivity, and they take place to remind ourselves of the debt of gratitude which we owe to the Lord, inasmuch as He saved us from annihilation when the pestilence stalked abroad in Egypt, and brought us forth from slavery unto an everlasting freedom.

Did time permit, we might enumerate many other observances, and prove their intimate relation with the well-being of Israel. But we must defer the greater part to another occasion. Yet this much will appear from what has been said already, that ceremonies, as such, have a powerful influence in arresting the attention and exciting inquiry. They are eminently calculated to call forth the energies of the youthful especially, to seek for light from those who are already acquainted with their belief, and to compel these, if they would wish to be proper guides to their juniors, to apply themselves to the study of the Law, in order to answer them understandingly when appealed to for instruction. This was, as we stated at first, the instrument of Deity to perpetuate the Law. He foresaw that, though we were a united people when He spoke to us on Sinai, vicissitudes would arise which must necessarily try the power of resistance, which we could bring to oppose the assaults of adverse circumstances. Many of these oc-

curred already during our residence in Palestine, partially through our intercourse with the heathens, but more yet through the inborn sinfulness of the human heart; still many others were the peculiar offspring of the state of our dispersion, which dissolved that national union which had united us together in more peaceful and happier days. The Lord therefore bound the truth of his law not to images, not to statuary, not to the magnificent temples, not to splendid processions, but to simple every-day practices, which were to mingle themselves with almost every act of the Israelite, which were to pervade every day of his life and accompany him in death. It was not by confiding the truth to a select few, by which it was to be preserved; not by constituting a priesthood the guardian of the sacred treasure, that it was to be shielded from the assault of every adverse circumstance to which the people might be exposed; but by constituting the whole nation this custodian, by rendering them acquainted with many acts of worship which were all to refer to the great truth of the omnipotence of their Redeemer. Moreover, it was necessary to prevent the mingling of this priestly people with those around them, for fear lest the small number of believers might at last be totally swallowed up among those who were in error. The Law, therefore, was magnified by numerous family-regulations, all calculated to cause Israel to dwell securely, and not to be numbered among the nations. When we cannot mingle with our gentile friends in their form of worship; when their sons are prohibited to our daughters, and their daughters to our sons; when we cannot sit down to partake with them of

the flesh of the swine, of creeping things of every kind, of the marine animals which have not fins and scales, nor even of the flesh of animals permitted to us unless their blood has been shed as the law teaches: we are fenced in by these rules that we cannot become extinct and lost, and we shall be always preserved while we remain true to these divinely instituted ordinances. Yet all this is not bigotry; it is no hatred of our fellow-man. We are restrained by divine precepts; we would offend against our conscience by transgressing; nevertheless, we cannot, consistently with religion, despise our neighbour who is not of the house of Israel; he is our brother, though he is not bound by our peculiar ceremonial law; he is a child of God, though no descendant of Jacob; we should, therefore, love him as ourselves, assist him in his need, and extend to him all the aid which our circumstances in life allow us to bestow. We, only we, are subject to the Law, which as yet is our inheritance solely. The time will indeed come (but it has not yet) when the Lord of hosts will be worshipped in Zion by all the nations of the earth; when they will each throw away their idols of gold and of silver; when they all will give up the errors which their fathers have taught them; when they all will claim the Mighty One of Israel as their God, and look upon his law as their rule of life. How happy will then be those who have been faithful to the last, who never faltered, never swerved from the line of duty which doctrine and precept demanded of them; how blissful will be the rich reward which the Lord of hosts will mete out to their purified spirits, and how joyful will they be who then

will be the first in our Father's kingdom, though they were the humblest on earth!

Thus, brethren, should you regard the ceremonies of our religion, as the bond which so admirably links Israel together in all the places of their dispersion, and preserves uninjured the pure doctrines of the revelation on Sinai. Be, therefore, on your guard, how you touch the least observance of all that which the Lord has ordained. His are the wisdom and the knowledge; therefore, take heed how you presumptuously meddle with his precepts, and set aside that which He has ordained, or disobey that which He has commanded. But you who are faithful, rejoice in the Lord, in the God of your fathers. He will be with you in all your endeavours; He will make easy for you the trials of life, and reward you for your toil with a thousand-fold greater happiness, accept your deeds, and cause much good to result from your efforts to glorify his holy Name.

May then his glory dwell among us, and may He be glorified and extolled by the mouth of all mankind, and may the spirit of all flesh rejoice in his salvation. Amen.

Nissan 14th. } 5603.*
April 14th. }

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* This address was omitted in its proper place, and is therefore put here, near the end of the lectures delivered in the Mikvé Israel Synagogue.

DISCOURSE XXIII.

THE CHOSEN PEOPLE OF GOD.*

EVERLASTING FATHER! how wonderful are thy ways, and how highly art Thou exalted above all that exists! If we cast our eyes to heaven, we there see Thee displayed in the myriads of shining lights that are fixed in the immensity of space, in the softly beaming moon, and in the brilliant sun which quickens all below by his warming rays. If we descend to the earth—the planet surrendered to us for our dwelling—we see Thee, we feel thy presence and power in the infinite variety of organization which everywhere meets our view. And who knows not, our God! that by thy will alone the river rushes onward in its course to mingle with the mighty waves of the boundless ocean? Who feels not that, by Thee directed, the refreshing breeze and the fearful storm are sent on their errands of love or wrath? And when the wintry snows are spread over the landscape, or when, amidst the thick foliage of vernal trees, every bird sings forth in harmony its Maker's praise, who feels not that thy power guides and blesses all? And when we turn our view within us, and experience the happiness of a sentient soul, and are made conscious that we have a law from Thee which will ever point out the road to happiness and salvation: who can fail of thankfulness for

* A Pentecost discourse, delivered at the Cherry Street Synagogue, Philadelphia. The date cannot be ascertained.

the One, Thee alone, by whose favour the soul was breathed into the senseless clay, and the law was proclaimed from amidst fire and darkness? Oh! teach us thy ways; make us feel our nothingness without thy aid and protection, so that despising worldly greatness, which is fleeting and vain, we may lean upon Thee for protection, and crave thy blessing in all our undertakings during our sojourn in this life of trial and tribulation. May this be thy will. Amen.

Brethren!

Our wise men who, in days gone by, stood forward as the guides of their associates—who taught the law without price or hope of reward—and who not unfrequently incurred the greatest personal risks, even to the very loss of life itself, in the discharge of their assumed duties, have left us many beautiful and sage aphorisms, than which nothing truer is discoverable in the writings of the great names of any other nation. Without, however, doing more to-day than merely adverting to this indisputable fact, we will call your attention to one saying of the pre-eminently pious Rabbi Akiba, whose happy lot it was to exhibit in his own resignation under the tortures he endured for the public teaching of his Master's commandment in opposition to the mandate of a heathen tyrant, that the blessed faith that was in him could rise triumphant even above the pangs of death, and place him worthily amidst the bright galaxy of the great ones to whom the glory of the Lord had in former years been revealed. These are his words: "He (Rabbi Akiba) used to say, Man is surely dear to God, because He created him in his image; but an addi-

tional evidence of love it is that it was made known to him, that he was created in the image of God, because it is said, 'For in the image of God did He make man.' The Israelites are dear to God, because they are called children of the Lord; but an additional evidence of love it is that it was made known to them, that they are called children unto the Lord; for it is said, 'You are children unto the Lord your God.'" And he then continues:

חביבין ישראל שנתן להם כלי חמדה חבה יתרה נודעת להם שנתן להם כלי חמדה שבו נברא העולם שנאמר כי לקח טוב נתתי לכם תורתי אל תעזבו :

אבות ג' יח':

"The Israelites are dear, because there has been given to them that precious ornament in which the world was created; but it is an additional evidence of love that this was made known to them; for it is said: 'A good instruction I have given you, forsake ye not my law.'" Aboth iii. 18.

The learned Rabbi presents us a threefold cause of gratitude by which every individual Israelite is bound to his Maker. In the first instance, we are called on to reflect on the overflowing goodness of the Lord, inasmuch as He bestowed on a creature, perishable from the nature of its material composition, an intelligent spirit, a part, as it were, of his own essence. Let it be ever before our minds, permanently impressed upon our soul, that we have received an existence more exalted, more refined, more enduring, than has been vouchsafed to any other earthly creature. We stand not alone erect in the sight of Heaven;

we not only turn upward our gaze to the starry firmament studded with its millions of suns, and planets on planets; but we do more—we turn our look from these high objects to the laws which govern them; we trace them from their rising to their setting, and note their course with the astounding accuracy of mathematical investigation; we enjoy already in anticipation their regular reappearance at their appointed stations, and fearlessly venture on the trackless ocean, shown on our way by their wonderful instruction. Indeed, it is not the mere superior animal outline which constitutes us men, made in the image of God, but the intellect, which makes this miraculously formed frame of real benefit to the possessor and to others. In looking at the beast, we never find that its care extends farther than to its own preservation and the early support of its young; for even these are abandoned to themselves so soon as they are able to provide for their own wants. But man, made in the image of God, extends the fruits of his benevolence to all who approach his sphere, unless he is brutally dead to the call of natural benevolence within him, and lays up treasures, mental no less than physical, for the benefit of his offspring, though they no longer require his immediate care to supply themselves with food. Reason alone, the gift of the Lord, thus already points out to us our degree of belovedness in the eyes of our Maker. But, says the moralist, we can discover an additional evidence of love in the fact that we are certified by Holy Writ of our exalted condition. For powerful as human reason is to guide us aright in our investigations, far-reaching as is our intellect in elucidating the mysteries of outward na-

ture, and the occult things of science: we are, nevertheless, not thereby enabled to know with precision what are the thoughts and wishes of our Creator. But if Holy Writ steps in and assists us in our investigations, uncertainty at once vanishes, and we are brought into the very counsel of our ever-living Father—we see Him as He is, not as our misled fancy might arbitrarily paint Him; and if then our reason, in assigning to man the pre-eminence in creation, is aided by the express words of the Lord, satisfying us that He made us in his spiritual image, we may freely cease our investigations, the inquiry is fully answered, and, without presumption or overweening pride, we may claim for ourselves the possession of the divine image, and that we must be dear to God, because we were so created, and because we were so instructed in the holy Book which was given for our guidance. But this beloved being, this child of earth filled with the image divine, must needs feel drawn to the Source from which he sprang by the strongest ties of kindred, of filial love, of dutiful obedience; and he ought to omit no occasion, from the dawning of his intellect till his returning to his Father by the portals of death, to offer thanks and devotion for the many benefits which are hourly heaped upon him, and to regard, with the eye of humble adoration, the many and, in fact, innumerable things, all provided for his well-being, and to view with a spirit of good-will and friendship all who are like him equally possessed of the ethereal essence, and equally with him heirs to the bounteous table so liberally spread for all by the Creator of universal nature. Thoughts like these will chase away all ideas of self-dependence and contempt

of others; for, if we are thoroughly convinced that all we are, we are through God alone, that of ourselves we are powerless, and without the means of happiness and enjoyment; that, at his bidding, our prosperity must suddenly cease, and our joys be marred in the moments of fruition; and if, on the other hand, we but reflect that they, whom we would fain call our inferiors, may very soon surpass us in power and wealth, not to mention in intellect: how can we be otherwise than humble before our God, who is so kind, so bountiful, and so loving and indulgent toward the deficiencies and faults of our fellow-men, who, equally with us, are created in the image of the Lord, and, therefore, are equal objects of his care and bounty?

"The Israelites are dear to the Lord, because they are called children of the Lord." If mankind in general have cause to be grateful to God, how much greater is this obligation upon the sons of Israel, his servants! Only reflect: what was the state of the world when our father Abraham first forsook his distant home near the Euphrates? No conception can be formed, from any state of society around us, of the dreadful degradation then almost universal. No written word of God was then in existence, at least no record has come down to us to prove that there was a written revelation universally spread among men; the traditions of the power and will of the Most High, so well preserved, by transmission from father to son, in the commencement of the history of man, by reason of the extraordinary longevity of our first parents for twenty generations, were already fast falling into oblivion, and making way to the spread of irreligion

and idolatry; and the universal speech which belonged to all men immediately after the flood had already yielded to the multiplicity of dialects, by which the transmission of truth became greatly impeded. Tyrants, too, had already usurped the place of authority in many countries; and with the decay of the worship of the Eternal, the freedom of man was fast flying affrighted before the power of superstition and tyranny. It was then that the beloved of the Lord grasped hold of the everlasting truth of the existence of one Supreme, who is alone the Eternal, and spread this sublime doctrine amidst benighted nations; and though we do not find it recorded that many converts embraced his faith, we are, nevertheless, certain that his mission opposed a mighty barrier to the spread of error, which otherwise might have become universal. The descendants of this great man were naturally, like him, worshippers of the one God, and as they had peculiar rites, and as an initiation was required for all who entered into their confederacy for the upholding of the truth as they had received it, they were, without a great stretch of the imagination, called children unto the Most High, they being men who worshipped not a multitude of deities, but the Creator alone, whom they professed to recognize in all the objects which administered to their wants or pleasures. But a renewed cause for assuming this title was given them in their preservation during a long servitude in Egypt; for though they were subjected to the most rigorous labour, and the most grinding oppression, and the most wanton slaughter, they lost not altogether the knowledge of their ancestral God, and directed to Him their prayers

for deliverance and enlargement. And their prayers were heard; and they were led forth from their chains, not as a multitude of slaves, not as barbarians, without a national name or ancestral reputation, but as the nation of Israelites, as descendants from the greatest names of antiquity, as heirs of the knowledge of the existence of the only true God. Were they not then children unto the Lord? Would not reason, their own conviction, have taught them this? But again does prophecy step in to make us feel secure that our reasonable conviction is just and proper. God, in his holy Word, especially certifies us that indeed He looks upon us as his sons. Yes, every individual Israelite is a special object of his care, inasmuch and whenever he observes the duties of gratitude, of love, of obedience in his intercourse with his Almighty Father, who will surely protect and bless him whenever his care is sincerely invoked. We are, therefore, fully justified in returning thanks to God for our selection, as we do in our prayers: "Thou hast chosen us from all people; Thou hast loved and favoured us, and exalted us above all tongues, and sanctified us with thy commandments, and brought us near unto thy service, O our King! and hast called us by thy great and holy Name;"— but not to exalt ourselves above the rest of mankind, to esteem ourselves better and wiser than other nations, only to prove our superiority by acting as becomes persons whose lot is so beautiful, to show ourselves worthy to be indeed called the people whose God is the Lord. Let us understand well, that the ideas which a people entertain of the Deity naturally affect their general conduct as well as their mode of

thinking. If, therefore, a mean and degrading conception of the First Cause should unfortunately be the lot of any nation, so in proportion will its intellectual capacity and morals sink down below the exalted level of religious enlightenment; and in the same measure as a nation rises into a better appreciation of the nature of God (to use an almost profane expression), so will also its intellect and morals improve. And we may maintain that, with the highest acknowledgment, the brightest conception of his being, which characterize the people of Israel, are inseparably connected the clearest appreciation of our duties, and the most enlightened conception of nature and its results; and that as a people recede from our standard of religious recognition of the Lord, so must they fall behind us in the realization of truths and capacity for moral worth, which are far more valuable than the acquisition of certain sciences and physical improvements, in which many people, we will grant for argument's sake, have made greater advances than the Israelites. Admitting this, however, it does not prove any absolute inferiority on our part, or an incapacity for acquiring an equal degree of excellence in the practical sciences and arts, compared with any other part of mankind, whilst as yet no class of men has attained to a proper participation in our own received views of the unity of God, his mercy and attributes. Of a certainty, therefore, we may justly lay claim to a cause of thankfulness for this great blessing which is ours from the cradle; and, if we do not realize all the practical advantages which should result from it, by which I mean, if our conduct is not such as this great degree of knowledge of the truth

might cause one justly to expect from every son and daughter of Israel, the fault lies not in the system, but in the fact that we are unwilling to submit our will to the arbitrement of our Father in heaven, and because we will not heed the light that could illumine, if we only valued it, every recess, nay, the darkest hours of our whole existence. O! if we would only be obedient to our Benefactor, and approach Him with childlike confidence in every hour of life, mid joy and mid sorrow, mid glory and mid shame, how tranquilly would our existence glide along, until the current of our earthly career, the tumultuous rush of the stream of cares and tribulation, should serenely mingle with the fearful wastes of the ocean of eternity, which would bear us then onward in blissful calm and serenity, to the mansion of our immortal Parent, the God of all flesh, the Lord of all spirits.

"The Israelites are dear, because there has been given to them that precious ornament in which the world was created." If the Lord had merely redeemed us, because of his covenant with our forefathers, from the thraldom of Mitzrayim's kings, we would have had little permanent cause to be distinguished above the gentiles; because the corruption engendered by a long course of oppression had hardened our mind, and rendered us not much elevated above them in religious knowledge, although the whole of the ancestral traditions, as said already, had not been forgotten, whilst we were undoubtedly beneath our rulers in the arts and elegancies of life. But the Merciful One would not redeem us to mock us with a useless freedom, which would soon have mingled us again with the nations among whom we

would have taken up our dwelling, never more to be distinguished as a separate people. He therefore led us forth unto the Mount of God, even the blessed Sinai, and from its summit announced to us laws, holy and imperishable as is their Author, whose word is unchangeable, and whose seal is truth. But what is this law? It is the principle of universal justice and love. It is the jewel for which, and in which, the world was created. Think you that aught but justice and love are the principles which govern the Creator? Believe you that the least approach of caprice and malevolence finds a place in his counsel? If so you think and believe, little can you boast of a knowledge of the Most Holy. He should be unjust? He not loving every creature? He wavering in his purpose? He listening to the breathings of hate and anger? No, no! not so is our God,—not thus do we recognize Him who has made us for our happiness and his glory. "The dead cannot praise the Lord," says the Psalmist. It is the living who can contemplate his wonders and spread the fame of his mercies. It is life, therefore, He desires, and it is mercy, truth, and love He means to spread forth over the earth, even when, to our imperfect vision, we fancy for a moment that his face is hidden, and clouds obscure the sunshine of his favour. Now, even as He is himself loving and preserving all, so must needs be his Word; for we could not call Him all-perfect, if his laws were calculated to promote hatred, malevolence, and oppression; or if their observance could in any manner check the progress of human improvement in civilization, or the advance of useful sciences and elegant arts, since all these, if properly employed,

tend to increase our usefulness and happiness; or, lastly, if the doctrines which they presuppose would fetter the understanding with senseless fear, or, in other words, fill the mind with superstitious terrors and groundless appreciation of things which, from their nature, can have no existence in reality. Yes, if we investigate the divine law which Israel has received, when they stood with their thousands and tens of thousands, with their children and their old men, with their chiefs and the newly admitted stranger, at the foot of Horeb, on the day of the assembling, we will discover nothing which bears not the stamp of the highest wisdom and practical utility. True, crimes are denounced, and meet punishments laid down for the transgressors; yet, what is that but a due care for the welfare of the entire body politic? Is it mercy to let crimes take deep root and poison the vitals of society? Is it justice to let the criminal escape, from a false feeling of compassion, unwhipt of justice, and so render him prepared, by his impunity, for the commission of other crimes? If the mercy which the world requires were needed for transgressors alone, then indeed might you call it justice to have regard to those who have set the laws at defiance; but common sense teaches us, and we need no revelation for this, that mercy, misapplied, shown to the wicked, is an injury inflicted upon the peaceable and unoffending members of the community; and if the law does not avenge the wrongs done to individuals as offences against the community, individuals will be compelled to right themselves by acts of violence, or by precautionary means, even to the shedding of the blood of a ruthless aggressor. If then

you seek for too great leniency as an evidence of its mildness in the law of Moses, you will be disappointed. It promises no immunity to the sinner. But if you wish to see laws which can protect the innocent, and even the guilty, till his crime be made evident; if you are enlightened enough, and sufficiently philanthropic, to desire the peace of society, protected by impartial institutions, which can compel the evil-disposed to regard the sacred rights of others: then come to the house of Israel, and study with profound respect the code of Moses; for there you will meet with precisely such ordinances as will secure you in the enjoyment of your own rights, whilst they will admonish you to hold sacred and inviolate the rights and feelings of others. In this sense, therefore, is our code eminently conservative of the peace and happiness of the world,—in fact, a precious ornament to all who seek its instruction. But we may extend our inquiry, and regard its bearing upon the mind of man, in the abstract, without connecting him with the mass of his fellow-men around him. Let us understand that we have a twofold existence —a social and an individual. In the first capacity, we have duties to execute and protection to receive; that is, we are bound to perform a number of acts, such as contributing to the public burdens, protecting with our means and life the rights and liberties of our country, pursuing some occupation that we may not become burdensome to others, giving charity to the needy, and similar other acts, for which we in return can justly claim analogous deeds of mercy from our neighbours and society at large; for the state is bound to see that its citizens suffer no wrong from each

other and foreign enemies; and when we are needy, we have well-founded claims upon the assistance and charities of all who have the means to assist and to bestow. But in our individual existence, there are quite other relations with which society has properly no concern; but then even, as isolated beings, we have an intimate relation to our Maker, whose creatures we are. It is proper, therefore, that, in a wise code of laws, there be at least some regulations which look towards the relations of man to God, which will give him some insight into the attributes of the Supreme Father, and afford him some hints how he can make himself acceptable to this infinite Being, with this sole limitation, that the doctrinal part should be worthy of the exaltedness of the Creator, and the duties not to be degrading to the intellect of man. And precisely this we find again accomplished in the law of Moses. Of God's attributes we have received such information, that no human ingenuity can add aught to their sublimity and force; and the duties are of that kind, that no man can ever say that his intellect is degraded whilst worshipping the Lord after our manner, or that the details are too difficult for his attainment.

Of the attributes of the Creator we have the following revelation in answer to the request of Moses, to be made acquainted with the Almighty's ways: "The Lord is the immutable and eternal Being; an omnipotent God, merciful and gracious; long suffering and abundant in beneficence and truth; keeping mercy even unto the thousandth generation; forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and yet not permitting guilt to pass entirely unrequited." If you

invest, in your search for the sublime and beautiful, the Author of all with unchanging eternity, here you will find your reasonable expectations confirmed by Scripture; if you should insist that He must be mighty, the text confirms it; if you maintain that God cannot be capricious, irascible, and vindictive, your views will be confirmed by the words of Holy Writ; if, at last, not to multiply words about so self-evident a proposition, you cannot imagine God to be otherwise than exceedingly beneficent, indulgent to the failings of his creatures, rewarding the offspring where parents have sowed the seeds of righteousness that the product may serve as a holy treasure to their children after them, and just in meting out even-handed justice to the rebellious:—in all these cases, you will find that the most exalted conceptions which a human philosophy could by any possibility arrive at, after ages of anxious reflection and inquiry, have all been long since anticipated by the simple revelation of that blessed Book with which you have been familiar from infancy. And as regards the duties, they are comprised mainly in the Ten Commandments, which we have read this day in commemoration of their public announcement from Horeb, and are summed up in the two main ordinances: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might;" and "Thou shalt love thy neighbour like thyself." In short, were it not for doctrines like ours, and for duties based on our code, the world would not be a fit habitation for civilized man; and, since we must believe that God ordains everything so as to answer those mighty purposes which are known to Him alone, we

must come to the conclusion that, were it not for the principles of eternal justice revealed in his law, and for the certainty that these principles would one day be universally adopted as the laws of mankind, this world would not have been created; for, were it otherwise, the order discoverable in the whole universe would have been interrupted by the want of order and justice on earth. We must, therefore, come to the conclusion, that the universal prevalence of the divine law was the primary object of the creation; and that all the stages of society existing previous to this happy reign of truth are merely preliminary, as was the slavery of the Israelites their initiation to their receiving the heavenly laws on the great day of the evident descent of God's glory before the eyes of an assembled people. How great must then be the love of the Lord for his chosen people, that He was pleased to appoint them guardians of this precious treasure! a treasure not counterbalanced by any earthly riches or glory; a treasure of knowledge and truth, which philosophers and deeply learned men ever failed of obtaining. And can we be indifferent to its value? Shall all the world seek its light, and Israel cast it off as a thing of no value? Let us hope that we, the descendants of Abraham, will know better how to prize the legacy which we have received, which we have guarded with so many tears, at the price of so much blood, at the hazard of all our possessions, amidst sorrows of which the moderns have no conception. Let us not be unworthy of our holy forefathers' honest fame. Let us not become a byword as apostates and slothful servants, who neglected their Master's trust, and disappointed thereby

the hopes of a suffering and benighted world. And well might angels of mercy weep, even more than at the downfall of Jerusalem, should that dark day ever arrive, which God in his mercy forfend, when Israel will be tired of bearing the yoke of the law, and quench, in the pool of amalgamation with a gentile world, the torch of everlasting truth kindled on this day, from the cloud of glory which enveloped the summit of Sinai. But such a day can never arise. There are truth and holiness amidst Jacob's sons, ay, truth and holiness even in the inmost heart of their sinners! and never did a soul of us depart from this life, but in the last struggle it felt that its hope of salvation was based only in the One, the Lord of all, the undying, the unchanging, the true and holy God.

And how can it be otherwise? Not alone that the law was given to us, we are again and again reminded that we are in possession of this great blessing; and God not only revealed himself in the days of Moses, but in ages thereafter He repeated through his messengers that He yet held fast to the ancient covenant, and asked of us to remain true and steadfast to Him and his Word. Is not this the crowning evidence of divine love toward man, toward Israel? Can we desire a greater proof of the value which the Lord attaches to the permanence of his religion? Can we demand more authority for our steady adherence to the same doctrines, the same duties, which we pledged ourselves to observe on our going forth from Egypt? There may be, therefore, those who, for the sake of wealth, political distinction, or gentile alliance, or from sinful wickedness, throw off their allegiance to Israel's God, and sever thus their union with Israel's

race; but the entire people must not, will not, cannot forsake their God and their law. No, no! the heavens may vanish, and the earth wear old as a garment; but whilst the love of the Lord burns with its undying brightness, whilst his truth remains unchanged and unchangeable: so long will we remain an evidence of the consoling testimony, that there are hearts in which, indeed, the King of glory dwells, although his sanctuary lies waste and desolate.

Child of earth! dost thou well understand thy great blessing? knowest thou that thy immortal spirit is a part of the divine essence breathed into thee, that thou mightest live? Then reflect: It is by the favour of thy God, whose image thou bearest, that thou hast life and being, and to Him alone are due thy vows and thy hopes. Son of the covenant! offspring of Abraham! dwellest thou with rapture on the lot that is thine, because thou worshippest not a god that cannot save, that thou callest in all thy trials on One who was, who is, who will be? Then return to Him thy heartfelt thanks that He was pleased to cast thy lot in lovely parts, and reared thee to be to Him a child, even as was the sage, thy master, who first proclaimed the truth when he went forth from Ur, in Chaldea! Man of Israel! valuest thou the heavenly code intrusted to thy safe keeping? wishest thou that its living waters shall at the last fill all the earth? Then uphold its precepts in every stage of thy existence, and spread its knowledge to those who may, after thee, transmit this holy legacy to their descendants! Yes, as members of the human family, as the ransomed and beloved of the Lord, as inheritors of the covenant of Horeb, it should be our constant en-

deavour to prove ourselves not unworthy of the favour of the Lord; but we should strive so to live, that the Judge of all the earth may approve of our deeds at the hour of trial, and all mankind be compelled to acknowledge that, even now, there are left of the house of Israel those who are, indeed, worthy descendants of that ancient race who, thousands of years ago, received, and cherished through all trials, the law of their Father, whose essence is truth, and whose object is the happiness of all sons of men.

And now, O Lord our God! may all flesh feel thy power, and acknowledge thy kingdom; and mayest Thou in mercy remove from us all temptation to sin, and purify our hearts, and subdue our spirits, that we and all men may serve Thee in truth and love, even according to the Word which Thou hast written for our instruction, from now and forever. Amen.

NOTE. The date of this Discourse I cannot fix, as the MS., which was given to the editor of a city paper wherein it first appeared, was lost; it was however spoken on one of the Pentecosts for which an address is not found in this collection.

DISCOURSE XXIV.

GOD OUR ATONEMENT.

No. I.

O Hope of Israel, who art ready to hear and to save in all times of trouble and affliction! regard not our sinful state, and condemn us not though our iniquities testify against us. The creatures of circumstances, the fading flowers of the day, we are lured upon by-paths, and we stray perpetually from the road which leads to thy rest. But salvation is with thee, O Father! and mercy is thine, and kindness and truth are the seal of thy excellency. Act then toward us according to thy wont, and cleanse us from our transgressions, and sprinkle on us the waters of purification, even thy grace, which is poured out over the whole world, and which invites every one who is unclean to come and be purified, and which calls on all who are laden with guilt to throw their burden on Thee, O God! and Thou promisest to relieve them of their sorrow, to rekindle in them thy holy spirit, and to remove the heart of stone which is obdurate against thy goodness, and which refuses to see Thee, although in all the world thy being is manifest, governing with beneficence, and illuminating all with thy wisdom. Cause us, then, to feel truly the forgiveness of our misdeeds, let us be conscious that we are reconciled to Thee, and let the nations see that our hope was not in vain, and that our waiting for thy salvation was not an idle

thing. But let all mankind be enlightened by thy knowledge, that they may understand how Thou alone art the Lawgiver, Thou alone the Ruler, and Thou alone the Pardoner of sins; and that as no stranger god was with thee when Thou didst stretch forth the firmament like a curtain, and when thy voice spoke in the thunders of Horeb, so art Thou the sole Refuge for the transgressor, and that Thou alone blessest the just and redeemest the erring mortal. And thus shall thy Name be sanctified in all the world, and all men worship thee, O Fountain of Purity! forever. Amen.

Brethren!

In general it may be asserted that controversial sermons are not agreeable to an audience who are more interested in some historical or admonitory address, and who may imagine that controversy should be avoided, for fear of giving just cause of offence to our friendly neighbours, who might deem themselves aggrieved should they in our assemblies have to listen to direct attacks on what they hold sacred. Though agreeing in general with these views, I cannot consent to banish from our synagogues the discussion of purely Jewish matters, though they may come in conflict with the ideas of our neighbours, and are not well calculated for oratorical displays and fine phraseology. Nor can I think that any offence can be taken if we temperately discuss our own views in our assemblies; as the object is not to attack others, but merely to give our own people some means of replying to assaults on their religion, to which they are so constantly exposed. If, indeed, we were so numerous

that our opinions were backed by the public voice; if we could in a measure coerce the indifferent to profess a veneration for our religion by the indignant frown of the majority: then, indeed, might it be possible for the pulpit to confine itself to appeals, and if you will, to persuasions and denunciations. But unfortunately this is not the case; we are but a handful amidst the vast masses which surround us; public opinion, if not against the morality of our faith, is certainly against our doctrinal views and ceremonial practices; denunciations, as fierce, or fiercer than any Jewish minister can frame, are hurled constantly, even in our hearing, against all those who adopt not the opinions of the majority. All this makes it evident that the mind of our younger persons, especially those who are thrown into general society, ought to be fortified with some sound reasoning when they are asked for the cause of their abiding by their faith, and not merely assign as their sole motive that their fathers had been Jews before them. This, indeed, is a good reason as far as it goes. It shows in the one who urges it that he feels a sincere regard for his progenitors, whom, both by law and his own impulse, he is bound to love; but it is not satisfactory to the inquirers, nor will it stand the assault of temptation when interest and inclination point one way, whilst the parental admonitions lift up but a feeble warning voice amidst the tumult of passion. It is, therefore, but proper that those who are called upon to address the people should, whilst admonishing them, also endeavour to prove, occasionally, the superiority of our religion; and if this should assume the appearance of a controversial address, it can of right not be laid

as a charge of wrongdoing against them. But let us drop this introduction, which, perhaps, was unnecessary, and was merely put forward to answer any objection which may have been made against many of the addresses which it has been my province to lay before you from time to time.

The object of all religion is professedly the welfare of mankind, and however absurd his dogmas and cruel his practices, no priest did ever aver that he was an enemy to his species. The very persecutions which we had to endure from the cruellest of all tyrannies, the Romish Inquisition, were professedly contrived for the salvation of our souls; only that we could not recognize in the butcheries of millions of innocents anything except the basest superstition, acting, if they were honest, upon weak and excited imaginations. And to this day every absurdity and every trifling hair-splitting invented to torment the human understanding, which are offered in the name of the most sacred gift of the Most High—religion—are all based, as their defenders pretend, on the welfare of mankind; and thus the superficial might think all systems of equal value, or of no value at all, and adopt the first that is offered to him, in case he felt that he required something more than mere dry morality in his self-government. Every rational being, however, ought to have some cogent reason why he professes a certain faith, unless he would subject himself to the charge of believing blindly, and of following that of which he has no definite idea himself. Still is this proceeding too often met with; since men will follow a certain lead without exactly knowing why, and they often fancy that the greater their ignorance the greater is the

merit of their faith, as they term it, as though the Almighty had given us an understanding, which may be exercised in all pursuits and in every scientific inquiry with the sole exception of religion. This will give us now the following results: *first*, that it is not a matter of indifference what religion we profess; and that *secondly*, mere believing without inquiry cannot be in accordance with the intention of God, who endowed us with intellect; and that hence absurdities cannot be defended on the sole plea that they are calculated for the good of mankind.

It is not our business to refer to the systems which are lost in antiquity, or which are removed from us by distance, or professed by the unenlightened; for no one asks us to become Greek, Hindoo, or Shaman. We are only told by our enlightened neighbours that we are in error, because we profess to follow Moses's teaching instead of the doctrines of one they call a greater prophet than Moses. It is not my intention at present to examine into his claim to be received by us; as I only mean to confine myself to the peculiar religious idea which is preached up in his name, and to enforce which millions of Jewish souls have ascended to heaven denying it emphatically, from the burning stake, the bloody scaffold, the surging wave, and the ignominious gibbet. Every one who thinks must be startled with the fact of the great opposition of Israelites to the spread of the Nazarene creed, and he must admit, at the same time, that had it not been for a great principle at stake in the contest, the self-sacrifice of our brothers would have been madness, suicide, self-delusion, and not heroism, not an act meritorious in the sight of high Heaven, not praiseworthy in the

annals of man. But were our martyrs suicides? were they maniacs? were they self-deluded? Not a Jew, however he transgresses, however he has denied his faith, however he hates his brothers, however far he has strayed from his God, will say this, will so undervalue the blessed heroes who knew how to maintain their faith, and to perish in its defence if their death was needed; not an opponent to Judaism even, but will dwell with admiration, with respect, nay, with something akin to adoration, on the recital that thousands and hundreds of thousands went forth into exile, stripped of their all but their faith, because they would not, could not bend their knee to the idol of the hour, and swear fealty to a god they did not adore in their hearts. Mankind saw in their fury, unpityingly, tender maidens, reared in luxury, the admired in a circle of devoted friends, wandering half-dead, famishing for a drink of cold water, on the shore of the raging sea, turning their back forever on the country which they loved, the songs of which recounted the brave deeds of their fathers, the learning of which emanated from their ancestors, the commerce of which had been enriched and multiplied by the enterprise and skill of their own brothers perhaps, —yes, such as these were seen hastening away bereft of all, the scorn, too, of their former adorers, not heeded by those they had formerly nurtured and relieved in their distress—and why? because they had revolted against the state? because their hands were stained with blood? because deeds of infamy had sullied their name?—no,—no, they were Israelitish maidens, doomed to misery by men, however pure, unspotted, noble were their souls; and why?—be-

cause they abided true to the faith of their thrice-glorious ancestors, because they could not imagine, and therefore could not believe, and therefore could not acknowledge that the Lord God should change, should be false to his word, and vacillating in his purpose. It was for this they were driven forth, for this they were unpitied, for this they were scorned: and do you call them fanatics? do you believe them mistaken in their line of duty? when a word spoken would have placed them above danger? high in the estimation of the world?

There is, therefore, evidently something which the Israelite avers, for which he lives, for which he is willing to die, which the Nazarenes, for it is of them I speak, deem erroneous, and the contrary of which they have endeavoured to propagate and enforce, during the past eighteen centuries, pending all which time the other had nothing to oppose but an undaunted courage, an inflexible obstinacy, if you will call it so, which nevertheless was the very means best calculated to overcome the danger of annihilation which threatened him, and to extort the admiration of his tormentors. And yet, it is from the same source that both parties endeavour to fortify their faith; it is the sacred Scriptures which both appeal to in justification of their opinions. We have, therefore, a common medium to consult, and the umpire to decide with whom is the best of the argument, must be the *reason* with which we are endowed, the *light of the spirit* which the Creator himself has kindled within each breast. Let us then see what is the principal point of faith about which we contend, and then apply Scripture to its elucidation. The Naza-

rene being the claimant of a new revelation, must speak first, we will give him the precedence: he then says, that man in sinning has no means of salvation, that inexorable justice demands a sacrifice; that in the first man, Adam, all his descendants had sinned past redemption, and that it required a new creation, a being unlike any other that ever lived, created though not created, man though not man, mortal though not mortal, a servant of God, though God himself, to assume the sin of Adam and all mankind, and to atone for them to the Creator by his voluntary death. The Israelite denies all this; he says that man, though he sins, is not past redemption; that a sacrifice is not absolutely required for the atonement of sin; that in Adam's fall all mankind did not lose their immortal salvation, and that no such being as is alleged to have come, did come into the world; and what is more, that none such can exist, and that it is derogatory to God to suppose that He has an associate through whose means alone forgiveness can be vouchsafed to mankind. It may easily be imagined that there are other points of difference, both in faith and practice, between the parties; but that on which they diverge the most, is the principle just exhibited. Now we contend that our religion being from God, as even our opponents allege, must have been always coinciding with theirs, if they are in the right, and we are in the wrong; but that if we can prove that we have always maintained the same idea, from Moses to this time, we must be right, if even they are correct that their prophet was greater than ours. Were it now the case that any one would assert that the Scriptures are not at present as they

were in the beginning, we would have no authority to refer to for our justification; but, praised be God! that He has enabled us to be faithful guardians of his word, and we have, therefore, an unfalsified record to refer to, in case we are asked for the reason of our persevering as Jews.

Let us refer to the history of the most disgraceful dereliction of which we have been guilty nationally, often as we have offended, which is the making of the golden calf, while our teacher was tarrying forty days and forty nights, without food or drink, to receive the law and commandments on Mount Sinai. We had been only just taught how to fear and worship God, had been shown how great He was above all deities, how He was alone the Sovereign of heaven and earth; the fire of glory yet blazed on the top of the mount, where the glorious Presence dwelt; the manna yet descended for us daily, and was spread before the rising of the sun, like sand around our camp: and still we were senseless enough to despair of God's mercy and truth, because the man Moses, who had led us forth from Egypt, had not returned so speedily as we had expected him; and straightways we repaired to Aaron, to ask of him, "Rise, make for us gods, which shall go before us!" and when we beheld the image of the Egyptian idol, the likeness of a calf, we shouted, "These are thy Gods, O Israel! that have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt!" Was ever apostacy greater than this? did you ever hear of a treason more deserving of utter annihilation than this base ingratitude, this wicked forgetfulness of all that had been experienced, when we had been shown how utterly powerless were

the gods of Egypt against the outstretched arm of the Lord? It was therefore justice when God spoke to Moses, "Go, get thee down, for thy people," that is to say, Moses's people, not any more God's people, "which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, have become corrupt; they have turned aside quickly from the way which I have commanded them; they have made themselves a molten calf; and they have worshipped it, and have sacrificed unto it, and have said, These are thy gods, O Israel! that have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." Here you see how greatly the Lord thought us culpable; we had deserted Him through wilful wickedness; we had forsaken the way of his commandments, so soon almost as it had been pointed out to us; and we had made for us a god fashioned by our own hands, and bowed down before it, worshipped it, sacrificed to it, and ascribed to it almighty power, declaring that it and its associates had effected for us what is in the hands alone of the Creator to accomplish. What wonder, then, that the decree of destruction was pronounced against the sinning race, that God told the prophet not to pray for them, that they should perish even as they had despised and rejected Him! Moses was promised that he should become the father of a great nation, in order to fulfil in this way the promise made to Abraham, that he should be the progenitor of a people who should always be in covenant with the Lord, and have Him as their God and Protector. If Moses had been ambitious, in a worldly sense, he had now an opportunity of being gratified to the highest extent; not alone that he was a legislator under divine inspiration, he had now, also, opened to him the pros-

pect of being a patriarch like Abraham, the immediate father of a nation called by his name. You may say, this would have required ages to accomplish: granted; but what are a few hundred years in the providence of God? what matters it that an event takes place in this or that century? whether this or that generation become the agents in the fulfilment of the will of the Most High, in the accomplishment of his vast purposes in which we are all not merely idle spectators, but participants by deeds and thoughts, and this, whether we desire it or not, whether we feel it or not? But Moses did not desire his own elevation to the detriment of others; he therefore prayed, though told that it was useless: thus showing us that man should never despair of God's mercy, should never believe that the gates of repentance are closed to him; as our wise men teach us, לא היו ישראל ראויים לאותה מעשה אלא לתן פתחון פה לבעלי תשובה "The Israelites were not deserving of committing this great sin, only to give a confident hope to the repentant sinners." Whose sin was greater than ours? who deserved more to be destroyed than we? No one; still Moses prayed, he humbled himself for the transgressors, and afterwards called on them to show their regret by humiliation and sorrow for their misdeed,—thus proving that they detested their own backsliding, that they felt that they had acted unworthy of their high calling; and, in consequence, the Lord remitted their sin, and did not destroy all, although some of the most prominent malefactors suffered with their life for the great scandal which they had affixed to the name of Israel, by their senseless worship of an inanimate idol.

We now ask the candid inquirer, without reference to preconceived dogmas, Does this brief narrative prove the utter condemnation of the sinner? the absolute necessity of an atoning sacrifice? We ask those who assert this idea, to point their finger to the passage in the record which teaches this! To our apprehension, we are informed that sin is punished in a strict measure of justice; but that the Lord can and does remit it often in his mercy, without punishing to the extent of the guilt incurred, and that at the same time, when punishment has been meted out the iniquity is wiped away; because the Merciful wishes to correct and to improve, not to destroy utterly and to everlasting those whose days are brief, whose power is limited, and who cannot, with all their malevolence, influence permanently the course of events. As the text now reads, and as it unquestionably always did read, it emphatically declares that the Lord forgave the greatest national sin that ever was committed, without sacrifice, without mediator, fully and freely as ever forgiveness was accorded to sinners, and the decree of annihilation was revoked, and the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was not delayed in its fulfilment longer than it was required in the course of nature to educate a people fit to enter the land which had been promised them for their possession, in which they were to develop the high excellence of their revealed religion before the eyes of all the world.

We know not, indeed, what mystery some may discover in the plainest words almost, which the Bible text contains; but to us there is no hint of an associate, of an impossibility in the ONE to accomplish all

which He desires to do without any aid or inducement from any other source. But if this should not yet be sufficient, the narrative before us gives us farther insight into the relative position of man to God. After Moses had obtained a temporary remission, he descended the mount, and coming unto the camp of the rebellious Israelites, he saw only too palpably fulfilled what he had foreseen by his prophecy. There was the dancing, the senseless ceremony of the idolaters, the idol itself, and all was in uproar and confusion. We are next told that the prophet summoned around him all who were true to the Lord: when instantly all his own tribe flocked to receive his command, which was, that they should slay every one his nearest friend who had violated the precepts of the Decalogue in worshipping a false god. How sore must have been the trial of that mighty mind in this fearful emergency! To save the life of one Hebrew, he had slain an Egyptian, on account of which he became a stranger to the king's palace, and was forced to feed the flocks of Jethro in the lonely desert, far from the habitations of man: whereas, now he was compelled to see three thousand Hebrews bleed to avenge the outraged covenant. Yet this timely severity recalled the people to their senses, and the remainder stood by, and learned wisdom, and they felt anew that the works of the hands of man cannot save, that they are dead, without breath in their nostrils, without sight in their eyes. And then, when the law was again triumphant, and feeling how utterly inadequate all which had been done was to wipe out the immense guiltiness of which he had been an eye-witness, Moses repaired again to the mount of God, and

appealed anew for what he was assured was not deserved by the guilty. At the same time he felt conscious, meek as he was to man in general, indifferent as he was to the opinion of the vulgar crowd, that he had been faithful in all the varied relations of his eventful life; and that if any one could be received, he might offer himself as an acceptable sacrifice to his Maker; and he even offered, more than his life, the utter forgetfulness of his existence, so as not to be mentioned in that book where are recorded the mercies and deeds of God, in which he, the prophet, had been the most prominent actor; and he prayed in case the records of revelation should not contain the evidence of God's forgiveness, that the name of Moses might not be mentioned as a participant in the brilliant scheme of the world's regeneration. Was ever a nobler sacrifice offered on any altar? What, compared to this, is the boasted redemption on which our opponents vaunt themselves? for there was glory, a name, disciples, and followers in multitudes predicated on the sacrifice, which, moreover, is declared to have been both necessary and voluntary. But here the prophet desired to sink into oblivion, so it pleased not God to forgive the sin which had been committed against him as well as his Master. Nevertheless, no sacrifice was accepted, and God said:

מי אשר חטא לי אמחנו מספרי : שמות לב' לג' :

"Him who hath sinned against me will I blot out from my book." Exod. xxxii. 33.

If any one is to perish, if any one is to be blotted out from recollection, it is not the innocent, but he

who has burdened himself with sin: hence it results that a vicarious atonement for the iniquity of all mankind is incompatible with our Scriptures, the acknowledged word of God.—To-day we must break off here, in the midst of our subject, which I hope to follow up on a future occasion. And now let us in the meantime trust that the contemplation of it has not been without profit, and that it may rivet closer the bond of our union to our Father in heaven, the Lord One. Amen.

Adar 17th. } 5610.
March 1st. }

DISCOURSE XXV.

GOD OUR ATONEMENT.

No. II.

O, CREATOR and Saviour! listen to our prayer and the entreaty of all mankind, which may be addressed to Thee from all the corners of the world; because from eternity to eternity Thou alone art God, and among all beings invoked on the earth there is none that can save or aid but Thou alone. It is also thy word which has taught us to lay open to Thee the wants of our heart, and to appeal to Thee as the loving Parent who desires the welfare of his children; and in thus approaching thy throne therefore, with the words of our lips, we obey thy will, unworthy as our offering may appear to human reason. We come before Thee, accordingly, not as those having merit, as those demanding salvation for their deeds; but as

petitioners who only venture in the presence of their Sovereign, because He bids them to come, and to lay before him their burdens. Thus confiding now, O heavenly King! do we appeal to Thee, and deign Thou to listen, and to grant us life, peace, prosperity, and salvation, and cause that thy kingdom may dwell with us, and thy glory be revealed over thy people, so that each of us may become an acceptable servant, and distinguished as a faithful dweller in thy house. Amen.

Brethren!

In my last address I stated that our religion emphatically denies the necessity of a vicarious sacrifice for the sins of mankind, and that, unless the iniquity be freely forgiven, every transgressor must die for his own wrongdoing; since there is, moreover, no one capable of existing who has the power to assume, either voluntarily or by compulsion, the evil which has been committed by others. This idea is either true or false; and this again can only be settled by the standard which the Scriptures afford us, and no other; human reason is here at fault, and so is all authority, save only the words of the Most High; and however ingenious the argument, however the appeal addressed to us might show the insufficiency of our hope, it is all as nothing, so but the Bible be with us. I know well enough that it is said that we do not admit a sufficient number of scriptural records, that there are other books which claim to be of equal authority with the canon of the Hebrew Bible, and that these contain the refutation of our doctrine, which is sought to be established by us in opposition to others.

But it is not necessary that we should examine the claims of these various books to authenticity; for, if they agree with our Bible, they add nothing to our stock of knowledge of divine things, and, if they contradict in aught the doctrines of the Scriptures as we have them, they cannot teach what is in accordance with the divine will, or our books must not be what they have always been represented, that is, written by divine inspiration. Let me state here that we have nothing to do in this connexion with those who deny the truth of the Bible, but with those who admit all it teaches, and who respect every word it conveys as highly as we do. With them, therefore, we need not proceed with proving our starting-point, but we can freely take it as well established, and argue, therefore, every doctrine arising in our discussion upon premises universally acknowledged by all the parties in the dispute. It is, therefore, nothing to us what may be found elsewhere, or what others may say in explanation of the Bible text; as this, and this only, can be the arbiter in the contest which Israelites have waged with unwearied courage and unyielding perseverance for so many years.

Let us proceed then in our illustration. In my last address I broke off suddenly after adducing the text which I meant to expound, which was the announcement of God to Moses: "Him who hath sinned against me will I blot out from my book." It was briefly shown that, overflowing with love for a sinning people, Moses had offered himself as a sacrifice for the guilty, and begged to be blotted out of the book of revelation in case the Lord would not consent to forgive their sin. To this the ever-memorable reply just

quoted was given. Now does any one imagine that it was merely recorded for our amusement, to show us how God answered the prayer of a mortal? If this were so, we might have expected more full details of all which occurred during the period of three times forty days that Moses stayed on the mount to be taught by the Creator; we ought then to have received some more, if not all, of the conversations, if we may use such a word, which took place between the Most High and his servant; for it is not to be supposed that we are presented in the few words with which the books of the Law furnish us with all that happened. There must, therefore, be a deeper reason than the gratification of our curiosity, why this answer is recorded among the other emanations of the will of God which the Bible contains; and, it not being a commandment, we may be assured that it contains an idea which it behoves us to know and to cherish.—"Him who hath sinned against me will I blot out from my book;" not the innocent, not he who beholds, with grief and indignation, the evil which is committed all around him, which he would gladly check, but which he feels himself quite powerless in arresting, will be seized for the offence of others; but only those, who have themselves transgressed, will be punished to the extent in which their deeds may claim the requital which the Lord will in justice decree. Now we contend that this is the whole scheme of the government of the world,—which means that there is a direct responsibility for whatever occurs under the supervision of the Supreme Ruler, and this includes every act which mankind can perpetrate, from the beginning of time to its end-

ing, and from one part of the earth to the other. Every man has to answer for his own deeds, just as he is deserving of reward for every virtuous act which he renders his own. It is possible enough—nay, it is true, for the Bible teaches it—that both the good and the evil which men commit will be rewarded or punished in others; but this has another bearing than becoming a substitute for others; since, notwithstanding a good deed be rewarded in another, the actor himself will not lose his reward, not the minutest portion of what he can justly lay claim to; whilst, also, should iniquitous children be punished in addition to their own guilt, because they would not learn the good from seeing the visitation which overwhelmed their parents, the guilt of these last will not the less have to be atoned for in their own persons. Nay, the very consciousness that virtue has drawn down blessings, and crime punishment, on others, must heighten the enjoyment of the good in receiving their own reward, and deepen the debasement which the wicked experience in their own persons.

There is, it must be well understood, in all discussions and inquiries, a great danger of generalizing, and of assuming that, because one thing is true, another is equally so, for no other reason than that they resemble each other. But it is evident that such a method would enable us to prove the greatest absurdity by some fancied or even real resemblance it bears to an admitted truth. It is, however, requisite, especially in matters of conscience, that each proposition should stand by itself, and be capable of scriptural support without any reference to another idea; and if even the approach be ever so close, if the di-

vergence be, so to say, but the breadth of a hair, the one may be true, whilst the other is entirely inadmissible. I now especially allude to the doctrine of a vicarious atonement as compared with the scriptural idea of a visitation of parental sins upon rebellious children. The last idea is laid down in the Decalogue, "For I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of those that hate me." Let us stop here a few moments. What is the punishment of sin which is denounced by the Mosaic record against sinners? It is all of a temporary kind, the spiritual or eternal not being, as I have shown before, applicable to a nation existing as such in a civil government, forming a national union on earth, and therefore to be reached only in that capacity by outward and visible means; the spiritual bond of national union, our religion, being especially exempted from the punishment denounced in the awful curses pronounced in the twenty-sixth chapter of Leviticus, to which I would refer you. Some crimes, such as drunkenness and low debauchery, entail sickness and a ruined constitution upon the actors; and often the evil effects pass over into the children; and these, unless they closely watch themselves, and remove, by a most exemplary, virtuous life, and abstinence from the wrongdoing of their fathers, whatever traces of the disease may be implanted in their system, will expose themselves to the horrors of a prematurely-ruined constitution, and prepare for themselves an early grave, if even they do not equal by half their parents in crime and iniquity; for their system is already prepared to receive the fatal im-

pression, and requires but the kindling spark to explode the baleful magazine of inherent evil, which might at the same time have remained dormant, had the existing elements not been called into activity by the fault of the present sufferers. In this instance, then, we may safely apply the interpretation of our sages, who comment on לשנאי "my enemies," with כשאחזין מעשה אבותיהם בידיהם "when they lay fast hold of the deeds of their fathers in their hands;" when the children, seeing how their parents suffered, take no warning, but rush wilfully upon the point of the drawn weapon presented to them, which they could have avoided by employing only the necessary caution which was within their own means of accomplishing.

So also with the punishments denounced nationally, such as expulsion from our land; oppression by an invading enemy; the failure of crops; the prevalence of fatal epidemics: in all these it is not alone the transgressors who suffer, for the evil is either at once participated in by others, or is even continued to them after the real perpetrators of the wrong have passed away. It is, however, subject to no question or doubt, but that any such an infliction, as just enumerated, will be aggravated greatly by the conduct of all who suffer from it, or vastly ameliorated, and often robbed of its severity, if a strictly virtuous life characterize those on whom the misfortune falls. Besides, we are told in the same connexion, that every evil will be removed,—we now speak in a national point of view,—in case the nation alter their conduct; and hence any continuation of it in this wise does not show the condemnation of individuals, but the rejec-

tion of the body politic as an entire mass, for sins which were committed nationally, and which have not been nationally atoned for. I do not now speak to vindicate the justice of God; for the All-wise himself has emphatically taught us not to endeavour to account for his conduct towards man upon mere human ideas, and by the insufficient light which we possess, when He said through Isaiah: "For not my thoughts are your thoughts, and not your ways are my ways, saith the Lord. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways above your ways, and my thoughts above your thoughts." All we can do is to approximate, at an humble distance, to the wisdom of our Father in heaven, and to illustrate, however feebly, the manner in which He governs all. If in so doing we can catch a glimpse of his justice, or can discover a mere trace of his righteousness, we are amply rewarded; and we must then conclude, that, if in our present mortal condition, when our soul is obscured by the dark clouds which a perishable frame throws over its brightness, we can understand so much, how much more intense, how much more penetrating must our glance become when we stand disenthralled from earth, and its pollution, and its shadows, before the Almighty's throne, basking forever in that refulgent light which emanates directly from Him into the spirit of his faithful servants.

It results, hence, that when parents have sinned, both transgression and its retribution become more accessible to their offspring; the evil example will corrupt the mind, and the inherent punishment (for all vice has its appropriate retribution closely linked

within it in an indissoluble union) will more readily seize on the new generation, because they are more prepared for and exposed to its reception. Thus each generation of the wicked become more imbecile in mind and body; thus each generation of effeminate and deteriorated civilized men, composing a state, sink gradually before the assault of the more vigorous barbarians, who have hitherto been always ready to overthrow states, the vitality of which had expired in the downward progress of self-indulgence and over-refinement. If you examine the history of families and nations, you will find this fact clearly established, without, I think, a single exception; and I believe it to be so easily susceptible of proof, that I will not detain you with adducing any at present. I trust, therefore, that you have now a tolerably correct view of the denunciation of the Ten Commandments against the children of the transgressors, and that it merely affirms the well-known principle, which all experience has found to be true, that the evil men do often lives after them. This, however, does not say in the remotest degree that the sufferings of the first wrong-doer is in the least diminished by the transfer of a part of it to others: in short, no atonement is obtained by the number of participants in the wrong done, and in the bitter fruits which are produced as its natural consequence.

This will now give us the following result, that there is no contradiction between the declaration in the Decalogue, that the iniquity of the fathers shall be visited on the children, *if they both hate God*, and the answer given to Moses, that each offender alone shall be blotted out from the book of God; the first

referring to evil as transmitted both in practice and its consequences to others, the last as speaking of the effect of sin upon the transgressor, irrespective of his connexion with any one beyond his own person. As in the Decalogue no mediator is spoken of or hinted at as standing between the Most High and the delinquents, so there is none referred to in the second revelation to Moses, when he stood alone in the presence of his Maker, in the attitude of the most intensely heartfelt prayer. The idea is only enlarged, not circumscribed, not to think of being contradicted or repealed, and it leaves us precisely where the Decalogue left us, with the burden of self-justification resting upon us and all other sons of man to the end of time.

I shall no doubt be met with the objections, "How is a man to justify himself? what can he do to satisfy his God? has he any merit? are his deeds of any value? do they benefit the Supreme Being?" True; if we solely had human reason to guide us, if everything were reduced to the mere comprehension of nature and God by our finite senses, we would be compelled to answer that man cannot justify himself; that he can do nothing to satisfy his God; that he has no merit; that his deeds are, absolutely speaking, of no value; since he can, in no manner whatever, benefit, nor for that matter injure, the Supreme Ruler of the universe. But we are not left to mere unassisted human reason to frame our course of life, nor to adopt those ideas which will urge us on in our religious and political conduct. I employ designedly the terms religious and political; for however distinct they may seem at a first view, they are in the present state of the world intimately connected, and all

modern civilization is based upon the religious sense of mankind, differing though they do on many points, and though there is a constant change going on in the public opinion. In short, we have a revealed word of God to direct us how to act, which teaches us, at the same time, how to think. If our sound reason squares exactly with this superadded light, it is well; for then we perceive, by our own inherent good sense, that we are not deceived. But if, as it does frequently happen, we are not able to reconcile our own thoughts with what is held up to us as the emanation of Supreme Wisdom, we must submit to be robbed even of our own preconceived opinion, and adopt in its stead that which is more than ourselves, higher than our own inventions, more perfect than our own studies can evolve, which sprung, as we have the assurance of the wise and good, from the will of God, and the truth of which has been established by the long array of facts which history records. Whatever now this revelation teaches is to us, as a matter of right, motive for action, basis for thought. Let us then look into it, as respects our question of man's self-justification. Self-justification, however, simply means that if a man have done a wrong he may, or must rather, do something to remedy the evil, in order to be cleared in the opinion of the Supreme Judge from the taint of guilt which attaches to him by his own conduct. If now he has no means to accomplish this, he cannot be asked to attempt it; but if the Almighty has provided them, no matter how difficult they may be of attainment, he is in reason bound to leave nothing untried, in order to remove the displeasure justly incurred, through what he has laid to his own charge.

But this idea also includes the other, that man has the means of satisfying God, wherefore his deeds are necessarily of some value, however slight, and that they must be pleasing to the Supreme Being, although they add nothing to his happiness. We may thus at once assume that, where there is a possibility of pleasing or displeasing God, there is also included the possibility at least of self-justification; and hence it results that perseverance in a course, which excludes acts of a renewed submission to the means granted to us to acquire the good-will of Heaven, is as much blameworthy as doing the wrong in the first instance.

I have thus traced for you the view we Israelites have necessarily to take in basing our whole religion on the Scriptures; and they teach us accordingly that man can have merit in his conduct; because God has commanded him to do certain acts, which he can fulfil without any outward or inward obstruction, at least none which he has not the means of overcoming if he will, and which, at the same time, he is enabled to pretermit without any outward or inward force compelling him to their observance. It is accordingly this absolute freedom of will, a capacity for obedience with the means of disobedience in his power, which gives to man's action the value of which we are speaking. We may also without irreverence say, that he is here on earth an independent being so far as his will is concerned, not as respects his ability to work out his pleasure to the full extent; for in this he is as helpless as the imagination can possibly conceive. But in his independent capacity he is presented with the will of God, in whose world he is a subject, one bound to unconditional obedience, which,

nevertheless, he has the choice to refuse or to grant, as he may deem proper; and thus he is either pleasing or otherwise to his Sovereign, as he of a free accord prefers one course above the other. The merit in his conduct is not the benefit he confers on God, because this idea is never presented to us in the Bible; but because he could without force disobey, and yet prefers *obedience*. In this single word, therefore, the whole question resolves itself. God is the Creator, infinitely great and happy: man, on the other hand, is the creature, limited and subject to the will of God, but able to act as his own fancy may dictate. If he now follows the first course, that is to say, he is obedient, he has all the merit which the Bible ascribes to righteousness; for we know of no other measure or standard by which to estimate our acts. If, on the contrary, he follows his own fancies, although in this way he inflicts not the slightest perceptible injury on God, he offends Him and incurs his displeasure, and in consequence all the evils which are denounced against the acts which he has committed. All this is predicated, if his will has not been coerced by an outward force which he could not overcome; but if this be otherwise, his disobedience loses the trait of independence of which we just spoke; he is under duress, insurmountable constraint, and his deeds lose their quality of rebellion, and therefore are not displeasing, or at least not to the extent they would be if he acted without constraint. This, then, gives us, *first*, the result אנוס רחמנא פטריה "The Merciful absolves the one who is forced to do wrong;" and, *secondly*, that with the cessation of this necessity the sinfulness recurs in its full vigour for every repetition of the deeds, which

hitherto were not worthy of blame or punishment. So also with acts of obedience done under the force of circumstances, from hypocrisy, or with bad views; though they be of some value notwithstanding their defectiveness, they will not be accepted in favour by the Searcher of hearts, on the principle רחמנא לבא בעי "The Merciful demands the heart," which means that, in acquiring the habit of obedience to divine precepts, it should be from a sincere conviction of their truth and necessity, not merely a cold and formal acquiescence, which one would gladly be rid of, if he could or dared.

We have thus a standard of merit, in the first instance, founded upon the admitted truth of Scripture. But as each sin voluntarily committed is a continuance in rebellion, it follows that every man should cease his acts of disobedience the moment he discovers or feels that he has violated the will of his God. This, to be sure, is not self-justification, according to human reason; for it might be alleged that one who has offended wilfully his God and Benefactor has no right to expect mercy and indulgence. But we do not speak of human reason: we speak in the spirit of revelation; and this says that man can repent; that by leaving his course of evil, and returning to God, he will be pardoned by Him who abundantly forgives. I refer you to the fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, where you will see this clearly established. But a mere change of conduct leaves justice unsatisfied; man, therefore, has to submit, in addition, to any punishment which may be decreed against him, either by the judges who occupy the place of God on earth, or to the inflictions of the Supreme without the inter-

vention of mortals, and at the same time he should do all in his power to repair the injury he has done, and to avoid most scrupulously offending in future. It is naturally to be expected, that no one can say how much he must do to atone for sin;—how much he must suffer in this process of self-justification; but herein, as in primary acts of piety, he must of necessity refer the whole to the wisdom, mercy, and justice of God, and wait with patience for the issue, which is in the hands of God alone. It is not, understand well, in human reason that this is said, but only upon the explicit teaching of Scripture; and if any one does not find it enough, let him ascribe the fault, if fault it be, not to Judaism, as professed by us, but to the Holy Bible itself. There is, however, nothing unreasonable in it; for, if man can offend, as he does actually do, it is at last but a finite being who does the wrong, consequently, except in rare cases, he cannot offend infinitely. In general, therefore, all sins can, if we take reason for our standard, be atoned for; and respecting the few individuals of whom the Bible speaks as having been the cause of a succession of sin and its consequent evil, they may probably have to suffer as long as the evil they have caused continues. But where man's wrong is confined within a narrow circle, or rather, if the evil has not proceeded beyond himself, why should he not be empowered by God to repair what he has destroyed? And then is the whole idea of repentance nothing but a continuation of the justification by good deeds; and if these have any value (and who that believes in the Bible will deny this?) then must renewed obedience be also acceptable in the sight of God, inasmuch as

it is in accordance with the doctrines which He has taught us in his word.

You will therefore easily understand, without an extended argument, that the sacrifices ordained for transgressions in the presence of the temple were merely intended as aids to devotion, and solely acceptable as they were brought in faith, and not as assuming the sin of the transgressor, which is nowhere taught in the Bible, which only says:

ונרצה לו לכפר עליו : ויקרא א' ד' :

"And it shall be accepted for him, to make an atonement for him." Lev. i. 4.

But now, as we have no temple where to bring our sacrifice, we have the fullest assurance that sincere repentance, which is more than the blood of steers and the fat of rams, will be accepted, and that the Lord God, the Saviour and Creator, will not cast off nor despise the repentant heart which pours out its sorrows before Him, in the sincere hope of his mercy and forgiveness. Amen.

Nissan 2d.
March 15th. } 5610.

NOTE. About a week after the above, the last address I ever delivered in the Synagogue Mikvé Israel, had been spoken, my opponents succeeded to induce the congregation to pass a vote of censure on me, without granting me a hearing, for an article which had appeared about six months before in the Occident, my monthly magazine, which could not by any reasonable assumption be regarded as subject to the supervision of my constituents. Much as I had had to suffer before during a long ministry of twenty-one years, this was the severest and most uncalled-for infliction; I therefore

gave up the function of preacher, for which I had *not* been elected, as I could not with any feeling of true kindness continue to address an audience, who had deemed it advisable to pass a public vote of condemnation, as their expression of what was due to one who had served them faithfully in every sense of the word. I did not resign the office of Hazan for which I *had* been elected, and continued to the end of my term, the 27th of September following. Though I anticipated my retirement from office on the just mentioned day, I did not calculate on the sudden termination of my ministry in the manner indicated; yet even on quitting office finally, I did not once address the people in a farewell sermon, so that no one might accuse me of the least desire to soften their ill-will by an appeal to former services. But the occurrence naturally prevented me from carrying on farther the discussion of the question of atonement, barely introduced in the two lectures given above; yet I trust that the idea has been sketched out sufficiently to enable any serious inquirer to pursue the subject for himself with the aid of the Scriptures. So many years, more than seven, intervened before I entered again on the active ministry, that it never occurred to me to resume the topic, especially as I but rarely now write anything before speaking; though I have not for this reason neglected to urge the belief in God's power and willingness to pardon the sins of his people on my hearers in many places in my extemporaneous addresses.

DISCOURSE XXVI.

PRINCIPLES OF JUDAISM.*

To the Name of the Everlasting and Unchangeable God, the Creator of heaven and earth, the Redeemer and Saviour of mankind, be glory and adoration from all flesh, even from the rising of the sun to its setting, now and forevermore. Amen.

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* Spoken at the Synagogue Nefutzeth Yehudah, at New Orleans, on the first day of Pentecost, 5610.

Brethren!

We are celebrating this day the annual festival of the proclamation of the Law of God on Sinai, where amidst the convulsion of the elements an assembled people stood ready to receive the will of their Maker, by which they were to be guided, as also their descendants after them. In consequence of this it was that in every age the Israelites, of whom we, who are now present, form a part, did acknowledge their allegiance to this law; and our assembling to-day to worship the Lord, and to read the precepts which He wrote by his own divine power on the two tables of the covenant, proves that even at this late day in our history, the latest which we have ever reached, we acknowledge that we also are willing to remain faithful to the law and the testimony, which were on this day confided to the sons of Jacob. Or else why should we assemble? Why come hither into the precincts which but a few days ago were declared sacred to the God of Israel? Or was it a mockery that we devoted these walls to the worship of the Most High God, the sole Lord and Creator of the universe? But no, it was not a mockery when your hearts swelled high at the thought that now you had a place fit for the assembling of the faithful, wherein to unite in a brotherly fellowship, to invoke the most adored and adorable Name; you felt in truth that thus you had a point of union, where heart could link itself on heart, and spirit be kindled by a sister-spirit, to elevate itself above the trammels, the cares, the sorrows, the trials of life, unto that pure Fountain whence flow consolation, peace, and aid unto the children of the dust, whose lot is often one of hardship and tribulation.

You felt this, and you rejoiced that the work was done, and that within the new shrine dedicated for it rested among you the transcript of the law of the Lord your God, and that it henceforward was to be there as a testimony against you, whether indeed you love your Father in heaven with all your heart, and with all your soul. And is it now your intention that the mere ceremony of dedication, in which you so joyously participated, is to be all which you mean to offer for acceptance to your God? Did you say, you desired solely once to enter his portals, to show that you had a Jewish feeling for the solemn occasion, and then to drop it again as a thing of no practical use, as a weakness of which you had need to be ashamed? If so little be your faith, your absence would have honoured the courts of God far more than your presence; for is He not the same all the days of your life? did you ever discover in Him any lack of providence, any absence of kindness, though you have been provided for and liberally endowed all the days of your life? Why then should you feel devotion but once, or at occasions far apart, when circumstances combine to impose on you the necessity of appearing before God, and to join with those who adore Him?

No, it cannot be; you entered this house on the day of its dedication with other thoughts than mock devotion; it was not the novelty alone which prompted you to come hither; but you came because it is to your God that this house is devoted, because it is here that your Creator is to be invoked, let us hope for many, many years, even whilst we are compelled to dwell far from the once lovely land in which our fathers had their own national home, where they

obeyed the paternal government which their God and King had instituted for them, and whilst we are not yet recalled to Palestine, under the banners of that glorious chief, under whom there will be peace proclaimed to all mankind, and in whose days tyranny shall no more oppress the suffering, and slavery no longer cast its galling fetters around the limbs of the helpless. You came hither, because as Israelites you had long since desired to possess a house of your own, where you could assemble to worship and adore your Father, where you could have his law proclaimed in your hearing, where you might listen to the words of admonition addressed unto you by the servants of God, whom you may raise from time to time out of the midst of the people to stand in the sanctuary, and to address in your behalf the throne of that gracious and beneficent Parent, whose residence is the universe, and whose penetrating eye nevertheless surveys without fatigue or fail the most minute acts which are done, and the smallest things that exist in the immeasurable extent of his realm. You rejoiced that it had pleased God to excite the liberal feelings of a worthy son of Israel* to establish for you this house of prayer, and you came therefore hither to testify by your presence that you were not indifferent to the important event by which a residence for the law of God was established in this city, so famous for its wealth, its refinement, and its position as the centre of a vast and increasing commerce,—as a port whither ships flock from all parts of this continent and distant

* Judah Touro, who presented the Synagogue with all its requisite furniture to the Congregation.

lands, to exchange the products of this country with those of foreign soils, which have found their way hither. You were delighted that you would no longer appear indifferent to your faith in the eyes of those who differ from you in matters of belief and practice; inasmuch as you can justly now point to this noble and well-endowed building and say, "This is our house of assembly, where we mean to come to show that we feel as Jews, that we wish to act as descendants of Israel." And you come accordingly again this day, appointed to commemorate the spiritual birth of our race, on which we were instituted emphatically the children and servants of God, to renew silently, though I trust not the less sincerely, your vow of fealty, your oath of allegiance to your Supreme King, declaring that you will abide faithful to his will, either in weal or in wo; that in joy or in sorrow, in health or in sickness, in life or in death, you will only know Him, only invoke Him, only follow Him who was the God of your fathers, who was the Adored of Abraham, the Hope of Israel, and the Inspirer of Moses.

And indeed this is a glorious day, one well worthy of being remembered, and solemnly celebrated in all generations; no tears flowed when this triumph, this birth of a nation was achieved; no wounds were struck when thus we sprung into being; no slain covered the bloody field, when Israel took its rank as the foremost among the nations of the earth. And why? Because it was mind which triumphed; it was the glory of the Lord which immediately wrought the change; and though therefore the earth was shaken to its centre, though the rocky mountains were upheaved, though terrible lightnings flashed

and fearful thunders rolled,—all was yet merely contrived in order, as the prophet says:

לבעבור נסות אתכם בא האלהים ובעבור תהיה יראתו על פניכם לבלתי תחטאו :

"To prove you God hath come, and for the sake that his fear may be on your faces, so that you may not sin (Exod. xx. 17);

or, in other words, to teach us that we are subject to the will and power of God, wherever we are, and that hence we should dread doing aught which his will condemns, which his revealed word prohibits unto us. For behold! our God is not a creature, like anything of which we have any conception, who is wearied with watching, or exhausted by labour; who sees only what happens on one spot, and forgets that over which oblivion has waved its dusky wing; since darkness darkens nothing for Him, since in his presence the past, the present, and the future are all combined in one,—that is, the knowledge of all possible events is clear and open before Him, and because through his power alone all things are sustained, and nothing can therefore escape his vengeance, as all possible objects are from compulsion within his reach and his grasp at every moment of time. It therefore pleased Him to appear before our forefathers, on this day which we now celebrate, to impress them vividly with an image of his power, which did not, as before in Egypt and at the Red Sea, bring destruction and wo on sinners, but brought *them* knowledge and instruction how He, the great and irresistible Creator, desired to be worshipped, in order that his creatures might thereby obtain the largest amount of happi-

ness—a beatitude of which no mortal can form any conception, which only the disembodied spirit can attain and comprehend after the perishable has been changed into the eternal—after death has washed away the weakness and corruption incident to our earthly life. It was accordingly only to impress on the mind of man the knowledge that God is all-powerful and omnipresent, that He is able to accomplish all and to see all that is done: in order that upon every occasion when we are appealed to by our inward feelings to practise any act, or omit doing it, we may place before us the conviction that we are within the immediate presence of our Father, who will either condemn and punish, or approve and reward every deed or omission which we make our own.

It is, therefore, evidently the business of our life, first, to learn what God has taught; and secondly, to omit no opportunity for conforming to this knowledge; since the former would be useless, unless the practice corresponded with it in every respect. To accomplish this, therefore, to its fullest extent, it will be merely necessary to tell you to study carefully the words of the Scriptures which contain the revealed will of God,—to inquire of the wise and experienced among you as to the manner in which the precepts should be observed, and then to abide faithful to whatever you have thus acquired. It will be evidently not my purpose in a simple address to recite, even without commenting thereon, all the ordinances which comprise the body of the Jewish law; but I trust that you will indulge me a little while with your attention, whilst I expatiate on the nature of the precepts which constitute our religion. I do not expect

to tell you anything which you have not known before, and which you have not often heard; but it is occasionally necessary to refresh the memory, and to reawaken our perhaps slumbering ardour for what is holy and true; and if he accomplishes this, the preacher's task is done, as he thus follows in the footsteps of the holy prophets of old, and the blessed teachers of Israel in all ages, who added nothing to and diminished nothing from the Law.

Let us, therefore, confine ourselves to a brief review of the Ten Commandments, which have been read to us this day whilst we were all standing to listen to them, even as our fathers stood erect whilst the Lord himself spoke unto their bodily ears from amidst the fire which blazed on Horeb. At a first view, the Decalogue is divided into two parts, faith and practice; and the latter again into acts of religion proper, and deeds correctly termed moral duties. First, as regards faith. Every constitution must needs have a basis on which its various sections are founded; consequently our holy, fundamental code also needed a resting or starting point, from which all other specifications had to proceed. This basis you will find in the first precept, which, strangely enough, is taken by a kindred religion as the mere prologue, so to say, to the ten precepts which we received from Sinai. Without permitting myself to be drawn away into a long discussion of this important point, it is enough for my present purpose to state, that it is owing to a material difference in our respective religions, that this curious distinction in the enumeration of the Decalogue has arisen; and that the change by our opponents was perhaps necessary

to them, in order to reconcile their peculiar views with the alleged spirit of the Scriptures, as the letter is confessedly entirely opposed to them. But to proceed: We hold the first precept to be embraced in the verse אנכי ה' אלהיך אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים מבית עבדים "I am the Lord thy God, who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of servitude;" and we consider it as a commandment to acknowledge the existence of the Deity who thus makes himself known to us; and we view it, at the same time, as the foundation of our whole religious system. You all know the circumstances under which we had dwelt for several centuries in Egypt; we had been servants, or slaves rather, subject to the arbitrary will of king and people, and our voice of complaint against cruel treatment had been received with scorn and contumely. In the ordinary course of events but one of two things could have produced a change in our position,—either a successful rebellion against our masters, or their voluntary dismissal of us from their service. Of the first method history furnishes, perhaps, an example, though hardly to the extent of the liberation of six hundred thousand able-bodied labourers held under absolute subjection within the reach of the oppressors' power; but of the other we know of no parallel, certainly not if we take into consideration that the whole mass thus redeemed left at once the land of their former sufferings. It was, however, neither our force nor our masters' relenting which liberated us, but a series of remarkable events which compelled the Egyptians to consent, though reluctantly, to let the Israelites depart, as Moses had demanded. The residence of our ancestors in Egypt

is attested by other evidence than the Mosaic history; their liberation, as there recorded, is the most rational way of accounting for so remarkable an occurrence, so unlike anything known elsewhere; but the most positive proof of the entire truth of all recorded by Moses, is to be found in the sudden rise of the Israelitish nation, with peculiar laws, customs, manners, and sentiments, so unlike all other systems then known to the world, and since to this day nothing like it has been done to any other people. The going out of Egypt of our nation was accordingly a matter of the highest moment, transcending all that had occurred since the flood was universal on the earth, and swept away the sinful generation which had defiled it in the days of Noah; and as the last was justly ascribed to a superhuman agency, the former also had needs to proceed from the same Source, that is, the universal Power that governs the world. If, therefore, the Being who then spoke to us announced himself as the one who had brought us out from the land of Egypt, from the house of servitude, He at once told us that He is the all-powerful, the all-sufficient in himself, or the Creator of all. Only to Him who had created and does govern all things was it practicable to bend the tyrannical heart to his will, was it possible to coerce obduracy to obedience by the exhibition of irresistible force; and, therefore, He justly founds the necessity of acknowledging Him as the universal God upon the deeds of mercy of which we were ourselves the recipients, and of the truth of which we were ourselves perfectly cognizant. For, since the laws of nature were in a measure suspended to work the various miracles which then occurred,—

and since, notwithstanding this fact, all went on harmoniously as before,—since no convulsion of the regular course of events was observed, except with regard to those who had been doomed to suffer, as the Bible says, "but to all the children of Israel there was light in their dwellings,"—it argued conclusively that the Author alone of all things in heaven and on earth could have so organized nature anew for the time being, as it was then observed, which again establishes the identity of our Redeemer from Egypt and the Creator of the universe.

When, therefore, the first words which the Lord spoke to our fathers burst upon their startled ears, they were at once put in possession of the great secret which is the basis of all creation; they were taught to refer whatever is, was, or will be, to one and the same Source, to one and the same universal Power, to whom all is possible, and who alone governs according to his uncircumscribed pleasure, without the permission, control, or assistance of any other being; and inasmuch as we can fix no date to his commencement or termination, for being mortal ourselves we know only the limits of our own existence, we come at once to the conclusion that this Power is eternal, no less than almighty and universal; or, in other words, we were put in possession of the great light of our religion, that God is one, alone, almighty, and eternal, not affected by bodily incidents, and not suffering from weakness and other sorrows connected with mortal life. How great was this revelation! how ineffable the goodness which vouchsafed it! Behold! the skill of the wise had for thousands of years vainly sought for a solution of the problem of nature;

for all search had ended in disappointment and uncertainty; but here, in a few brief words, the Lord himself taught us his nature of oneness, eternity, and power, and we have lived in this knowledge,—it has become our faith, our confidence, our hope, our trust; and though mighty empires have leagued against us to rob us of it, we have constantly maintained it, and uttered it as our battle-cry against the assaults of mankind, and we have triumphed against our enemies in the name of the Eternal One our Father.

This in brief is our faith, as developed in the first precept of the Decalogue. If we next proceed to the laws of practice, we shall find them twofold, first, those which impose duties or restrictions which apparently do not affect our fellow-men, and then those which are obligatory on us as members of the human family at large. The first class of precepts was imparted to us because we live in God's world, and ought therefore to take due heed that we remain firm in our attachment to Him, and acquire such thoughts, as will, in the best manner, remove us from all those ideas which are inimical to an absolute acknowledgment of his unity and power on our part. Hence the prohibition of idolatry or image-worship; the interdict against a false or useless oath by the name of God, and then lastly the institution of the Sabbath, as a constant confession that we believe in the creation of the world by the free exercise of the power of the Lord, made manifest in the various material objects being called forth into active life or existence by his will acting through his word. The next class of ordinances embraces those which affect other men besides ourselves, or those duties

which relate to man in a social state, in his membership of the human family, or as one of the creatures who, equally with him, are the work of an all-wise Creator. To this class we may reckon the last six commandments, which are too familiar to all the world to need repeating now. But how different was it when first they were announced! simple as good morals appear to us, they were not universally adopted among heathens; and alas! even among civilized communities, human honour, human life, human property, are not esteemed so sacred as to be beyond violation on the part of the evildoers; or else we might dispense with prisons and other means to prevent, restrain, and punish crime. But if even it were otherwise, which it is not, and that all the moral precepts of the Bible were known to ancient pagans, it would nevertheless not militate in the least against the expediency of embodying them in the Decalogue; as, if they existed at all, which, to a certain extent, I will not deny, they were owing to an early revelation which Noah with his sons obtained immediately after the flood, and may, for all we can allege to the contrary, have been imparted even to Adam, our first parent. Enough for us it is to know, that the revelation which we have in our hands enjoins brotherly love, neighbourly kindness, and filial obedience, not as mere expedients to make life pass pleasantly, but as acts of resignation to the will of God, who, being the Father of all, commands his children to love one the other. But as the religious and civil laws are based on the same original foundation, that is, the will of God, there can evidently be no rational difference as regards their relative importance to us, unless

we had a peculiar method of discovering the intentions and thought of the Creator, except through means of his revealed word. But as we have none such, it follows that to us Israelites the religious and moral laws, as also those which enjoin an absolute faith or belief in God, are all alike holy, important, necessary, and useful, and that we can accordingly not lay claim to the title of religious men, or expect to obtain the blessing of God, unless we obey Him in every particular, and be truly that which his Word desires us to be.

The exposition of our religion, thus laid before you, is so simple and self-evident, that I trust that should any one not have been convinced before, he will now acknowledge that, to be a true Israelite, he must do what our ancestors promised in the wilderness, "All the words which the Lord hath spoken will we do." There should be no reserve, no choosing between one observance and the other, no rejecting of this as useless, of that as obsolete, or of the other as incompatible with the fickle spirit of the age. Our religion in its essentials knows nothing of progress, nothing of retrogression; it is the emanation of the Deity who, in his own wisdom, granted it unto us, a guide to our feet and a light on our path through the toilsome journey of life. How then shall we sit in judgment on the Scriptures, or even the teachings of our venerated sages, to reform, as it is called nowadays, the practices which have distinguished us from the very first institution of our people as a separate and distinct branch among the human family? Your own minister* has, in his dedication sermon, appealed

* The Rev. Moses N. Nathan, who had dedicated the synagogue on Tuesday, Sivan 3, 5610, corresponding with May 14th, 1850.

to you to exhibit in this country, where universal religious freedom prevails, a consistent religious character and a devotion to the interests of Israel. All that a stranger among you can do is to reiterate the admonition. Be then true to your God, as He has been faithful in his promises. He declared through his messengers that He never would cast off Israel absolutely and entirely, though their transgressions should be great and manifold. How truly has this been fulfilled! See how fearful is the measure of our iniquity; behold how little regarded are the sacred precepts; how many violate the Sabbath; despise the festivals; eat what the law interdicts, and join in marriage those who owe no fealty to Jacob's God. And what is more, how many are there who affect to doubt the ultimate fulfilment of God's promises, and would desire no better fate than to be lost and absorbed gradually amidst the nations, that not long since were ready to slay and torture the fairest, and best, and wisest of the daughters and sons of Jeshurun. Yes, were it not for the mercy of God which, undeserving as we are, protects us, fearful evils would in modern times have been sent over us, even as it was in those terrible periods when the two houses of God at Jerusalem fell respectively under the assaults of Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonian, and Titus, falsely called the merciful Emperor of Rome. But be admonished—let the seeming security not deceive you; the Lord is long-suffering, but He, at the same time, allows not the guilty to pass unpunished. Fly the wrath whilst yet it is time, seek for mercy whilst it yet may be obtained, and delay not to strive for the forgiveness of our Father on high, whose portals are

always open to receive those who hasten thither for shelter from the gathering storm, whose hand is ever stretched forth to snatch from the frowning billows those who call to Him for help from the depth of their sorrow. Do this, brothers of Israel! do this, sisters of the house of Jacob! and excuse not your present sin by the futile plea that hitherto you have acted as you do now; for how can you ask of God to be accepted by Him, whilst you will make your own pleasure the guide of your life? There is but one road of salvation to us who are called by the name of Israel, and this is a strict obedience to the law. Let this but prevail among you; be only distinguished in this community as faithful servants of the Most High, and you need not tremble when disease and death invade your dwelling, or when the current of your success is arrested, and days of worldly evil come over you. For then you will recognize the finger of God in all which befalls you, and you will have the fortitude, the endurance to bear in the strength of faith and filial resignation whatever He may decree concerning you; and though your eye may weep, and your heart be ready to break, you will rise above yourselves, conquer even death in the triumph of hope, and exclaim with the sacred writer, "Though He slay me, still will I trust in Him." But only be strong in resistance to sin, although the struggle be fierce; for in proportion to the difficulty of the conquest will your reward be; and be assured that not a thought will be in vain, not a word uttered without effect, which is spent in the service of God, who will recompense your labours in his cause, and prosper whatever you do in his name.

My task here is done. I have fulfilled the mission on which I came hither by your invitation. In a few days I must return, for a while* at least, to my former post. But let me entreat you not to throw aside as idle breath the words which a stranger to you in person, but a brother in the faith of our nation, has spoken to you; and be you, and the minister whom you have chosen, entire and true before the Lord our God; follow Him in truth and sincerity, and may He, in reward of this, bless you and prosper you, and make you a thousand times as many as you are now. Amen.

Sivan 4th. } 5610.
May 15th. }

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* Referring to the short period before the expected expiration of my official connexion with the Mikvé Israel Society of Philadelphia.

END OF VOLUME EIGHTH.

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